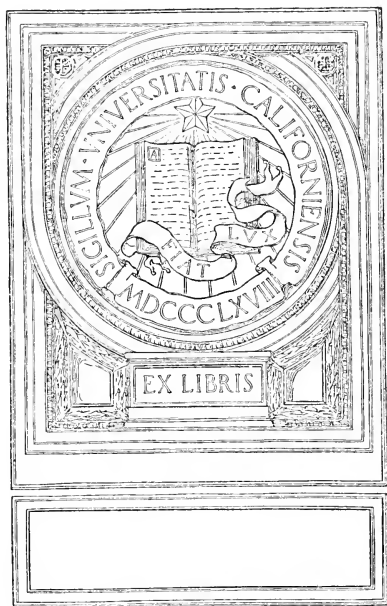
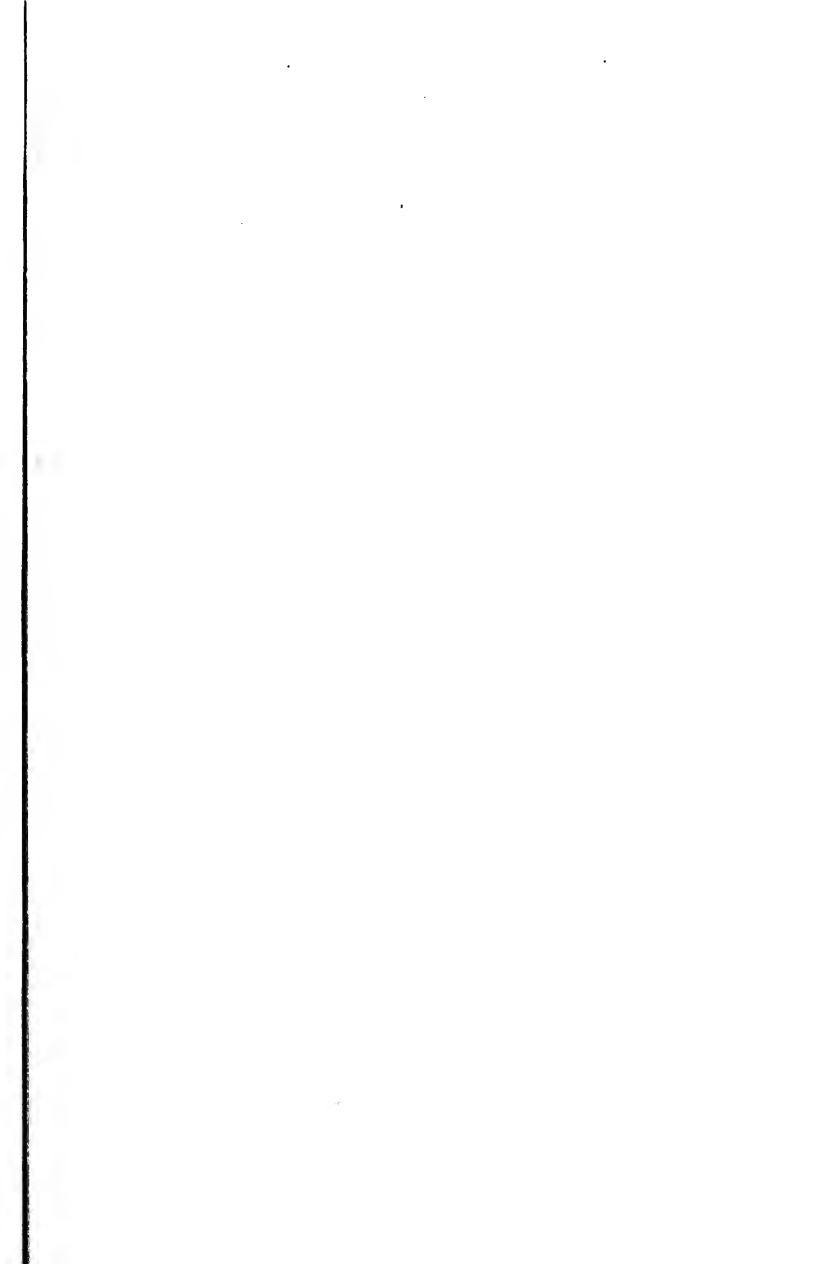


# RECOLLECTIONS·OF·AN OLD·MOUNTAINEER

WALTER·LARDEN

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RECOLLECTIONS OF AN OLD  
MOUNTAINEER



MT. COLLON.

# RECOLLECTIONS OF AN OLD MOUNTAINEER

BY WALTER LARDEN, M.A.

11

MEMBER OF THE ALPINE CLUB, AND LATE LECTURER AT THE  
ROYAL NAVAL ENGINEERING COLLEGE, DEVONPORT

' . . . The Hills, from whence cometh my help '

*WITH ILLUSTRATIONS*



LONDON

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## PREFACE

I FEAR that I have no good excuse for adding to the many books already written about Switzerland. I can hardly hope to write in such a way as to make readers feel the mountain air fresh about them; take a part in the adventurous delights of guideless climbing and solitary wandering; grow tense under the strain of an anxious quarter of an hour; experience the elation of a successful ascent; or share that special reward of the toils of the mountaineer,—that utter peace of mind and elevation above all the anxieties and worries of life which descends upon him as he wends homeward, wearied in body but clear and strong in spirit, after a day spent in the upper world,—‘trailing clouds of glory.’ So to write is not in the power of many; perhaps the very men who owe most to the mountains—and surely a tired school-master is one of them?—are least able to pay their debt by worthy writing; freshness and spring may be lacking.

Still, I am making an attempt. Speaking for myself, I will say that, year after year, I went to the mountains jaded, worried, and quite out of heart for next term's work. And year after year the Eternal Hills healed the sore mind, made worries seem but small things after all, and gave me heart again by giving me good comrades and true. To those who love the mountains, the vacations among them are far more than times of relaxation and pleasure. What they have been to me, I try to express here.

As material for this book I have had my diaries of some twenty-six seasons, which were written up at the time. Having had to compress this long record into somewhat narrow limits, I have sacrificed rather the climbing part of my experiences than what might be of more interest to the general public. I can only hope that I have not made the climbing element too 'thin.'

Finally, I wish to record my indebtedness to Messrs. Withers, C. Schuster, and Mumm, for patiently reading and criticising my MS. when still in a very incomplete and uncondensed form; to Mr. Alfred Holmes for most kindly and generously making me free of his beautiful photographs for purposes of illustration; to Messrs. G. P. Abraham of Keswick for the kind way in which they have met me, and for the trouble taken about this same matter of illustration; to Dr. Brushfield for letting me use a photograph of his, and for hard work undertaken in connection with the views seen from various mountain peaks; to Mr. Legh Powell for help given as regards some other views; to Messrs. Godley and G. Winthrop Young for allowing me to quote from their poems; and to various others whose names are not given above.

WALTER LARDEN.

OXFORD, 1910.

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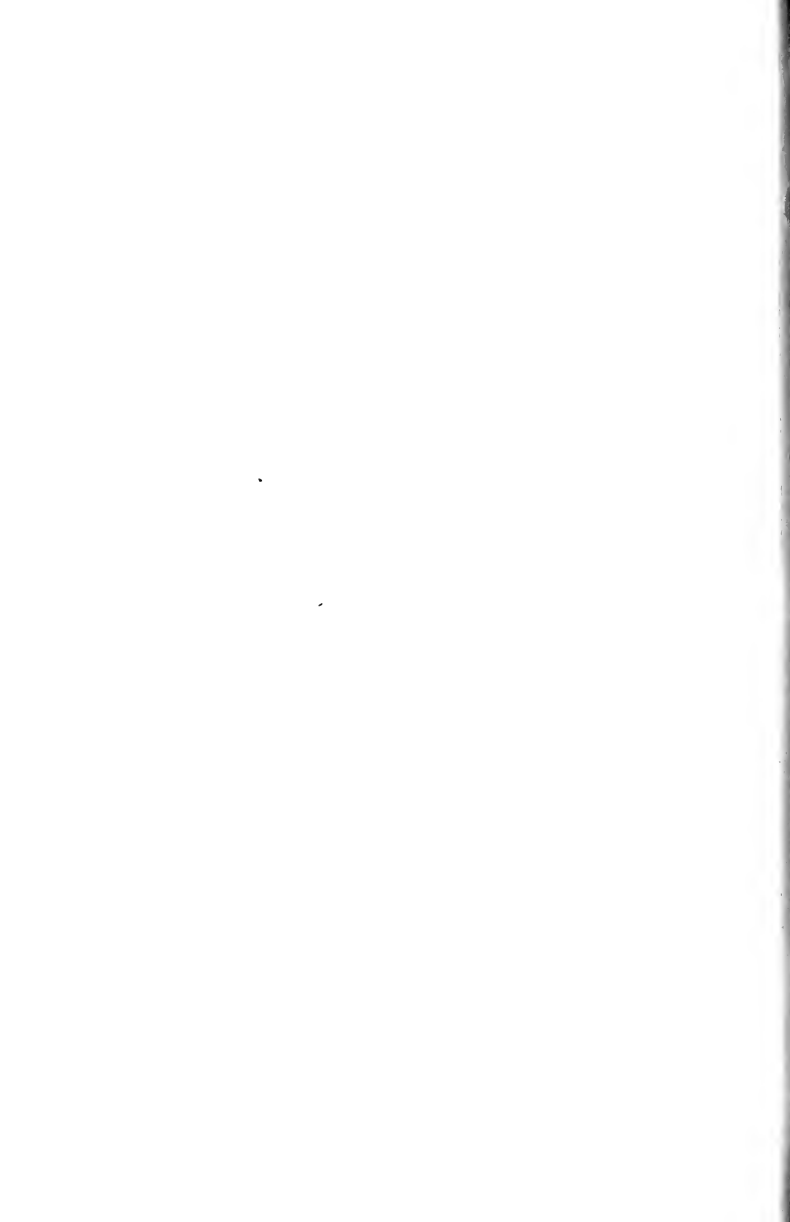
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# RECOLLECTIONS OF AN OLD MOUNTAINEER

## CHAPTER I

Together on the ice-glazed wall,  
Numbed by the slow snow-breath,  
Oft have we heard that instant pace,  
And looked intent upon the face  
Of our rude comrade, death ;  
And our clear hearts have leapt to feel  
Muscle and will brace tense as steel  
To wrestle one more fall.

*Geoffrey Winthrop Young.*

### INTRODUCTION—MOUNTAINEERS AND MOUNTAINEERING

It is difficult to write for a public that may consist, and I hope will consist, of both experts and laymen, as well as of those who come in between—tourists and travellers of varying degrees of experience. If one writes for the layman, the expert (especially the young expert) will often say, ‘What a fuss about that easy climb ; it’s a mere walk up !’ And if one writes for the expert (but I honestly confess that I should not aim at such a high standard), the layman will exclaim, ‘What affectation these climbers exhibit ; they pretend to think nothing of passages where a single false step on the part of one man means instant death to the whole party.’ Scylla and Charybdis !

## 2 RECOLLECTIONS OF AN OLD MOUNTAINEER

It seems to me that the best plan is to be natural, and to write from one's own point of view, and I will endeavour to explain what my point of view is.

And first a digression on mountaineering in general. No one need read it ; but I *think* I can help to clear up some confusion that exists in the mind of the public. They hear such contradictory things about climbers, that they hardly know whether to call them culpably reckless youths, or courageous (if eccentric) men.

There are two main classes of climbers ; I call them *mountaineers* and *cragclimbers* respectively.

As in most cases the division is somewhat arbitrary, and the two classes overlap. But it is not difficult to define the two if one takes extreme cases. The *mountaineer* I take to be the man who, in general, because he is drawn to and loves the mountain world—though a guide may become a mountaineer for a living only—learns all he can of mountain lore ; seeks to become sure-footed and a good rock climber ; studies the conditions that determine risk from avalanches, falling stones, crevasses, and mist ; learns to judge where he can safely go and where he may slip ; acquires an eye for routes ; and in every way qualifies himself to a greater or less extent to win the 'freedom' of the Alps.<sup>1</sup> He can call himself a mountaineer when he can deal with mountains. I class as mountaineering not only the climbing of the great mountains, but also the traversing of easy passes such as those occurring in the Binn-Devero-Tosa-Binn round when these are altered and disguised by spring snow, or the safe passage through lower mountain groups, where nothing worse occurs than the cliffs that so often cut off the higher pastures from

<sup>1</sup> As is, I believe, usual, I use the word *Alps* (with a large *A*) for the mountains, the word *alp* (with a small *a*) for the high pastures to which the herds are sent up to feed in summer.

the valley bottom, when mist hangs on the heights and bewilders hopelessly the inexperienced.

In the main the guiding principle of the mountaineer is to choose the best route and to avoid difficulties ; though, in these later days especially, he may sometimes feel it incumbent on him to attack a mountain on its more difficult side, and apply his principles only to choose the best route up this side.

The typical *cragclimber* is the British hillclimber ; and his principle is necessarily quite another.

Taking the Lake mountains as an example, one may state broadly that the British climber could not have learned how to climb, nor trained his judgment and nerve at all, unless he had intentionally attacked every mountain on the 'wrong' side. Thus, from the first, he had to *invent* difficulties. The most natural, if not inevitable, development from this beginning was that pure crag-climbing became a sport in which rock problems of increasing difficulty were set and solved. The point was not to reach a certain summit, but to force a certain route. I think that all must agree that this principle, which I take to be the guiding principle of the pure cragclimber, is a dangerous one. Once you aim at inventing and solving rock problems, where are you to stop ?

Life is not a plaything ; and while all who place character before mere muscular development approve emphatically of sports that train men in endurance, nerve, and steady courage, yet serious men who care for their work in the world, and who give a thought to their friends, will not play pitch and toss for their lives over a new route. Some time ago I came across a description of a climb written by a man whose party had, according to him, had 'imperceptible' foothold and 'unsafe' handhold for the best

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part of a climbing day ; and he called it 'delightful' and 'amusing.' (I lay much stress on the word *unsafe* as used by a climber, since it always implies danger that no skill can abolish.)

I venture to say that, though the death-roll among mountaineers is a long one, it is the more reckless *crag-climbers* who are responsible for the accusations of levity and foolhardiness so often brought against climbers.

On one other point I would venture to call some of these specialists to task. There are those among them who climb for the excitement only ; who would far sooner spend their day climbing in a gully that affords exciting 'pitches,' but makes no demands on endurance or mountaineering knowledge and lies outside the portals of the 'Celestial Kingdom,' than in gaining the sublime heights of Monte Rosa or in traversing the magnificent Col d'Argentière.

Let such recognise frankly that they don't care for the mountains, and that they are incapable of understanding that which has been the lifelong passion of men who stood head and shoulders above most of us. There is no shame in this ; it is merely a fact ; the sea too has power over some and not over others. But let there be no talk of 'beastly snow grinds,' 'not worth doing,' 'a mere walk up' ; phrases that I have only too often heard applied to some of the grandest walks and climbs that man can make. This attitude on the part of (I fear) a not inconsiderable number of the younger cragclimbers militates against the comradeship that should exist between all climbers.

The pure cragclimber has something to teach the less-specialised general mountaineer ; and the general mountaineer has, I think, still more to teach the cragclimber.

For the one can teach the other how to overcome certain difficulties ; while the other can not only widen the mountain craft of the one, but can bring him to discover pleasures that, all the more because they are free from taint of personal triumph, will touch his soul as no success in a new rock route can, and will endure when hand, foot, and nerve no longer serve him on the Pillar rock or the Charmoz.

And, to make a still further digression, there are not only two classes of climbers, but also two ways of taking Switzerland.

Some take it as a holiday resort, or perhaps as a gymnasium, hired for the holidays by the English. They do not get to know the people, do not even trouble to learn what is, by the Swiss, considered courteous or discourteous behaviour ; do not study their languages or read their history. Naturally, the Swiss regard such visitors as useful factors in the *Fremden-industrie* ; but they do not like them, and do not regard them as friends.

Another class (far smaller in numbers, alas !) try to get to know the Swiss and their languages, and to learn the country patiently, working up from the lower hills and easy passes to the higher mountains. They compare notes with Swiss climbers—whose guests all are, by the way, in the huts—when they come across them, and get to know in a friendly way the landlords of the mountain inns ; from some favourite haunt they may even get letters of the village news in the winter. They are welcomed back as ‘ Herr Blank,’ and not as ‘ Number So-and-So.’

It will have become evident by now from what point of view I write. It is that of a (moderate) mountaineer, and not that of a cragclimber, in the first place ; and that of the sojourner who seeks to understand the people and their

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country, not that of the passing tourist, in the second place. The circumstances of my introduction to Switzerland, natural bent, and even a certain natural weakness—in point of fact a natural horror of heights and depths that caused my mountaineering education to proceed very slowly—all worked together towards the result indicated. †

To this same weakness, not unusual in those brought up in the Midlands, must be ascribed, in part, what will seem to many experts to be some exaggeration of the difficulties and dangers of climbs which they do not reckon as serious undertakings. But to this realisation of perils, two other factors have contributed. I have on one occasion seen a guide, on another a friend, fall on rocks, and our escape from destruction was most unexpected; I have seen a guide make, in the matter of a snow-bridge, a mistake that should have killed us all; I have, with my two companions, narrowly escaped being carried away with a breaking cornice. And again, I have lost friends; the mountains killed them without pity. They broke some rule, ran some too-great risk; and the mountains they loved, which until then had given them health and new life and friends, in a flash changed and dealt them death.

What wonder if many a time some sheer rock-face, some frozen couloir—in the early hours when one's spirit of enterprise yet sleeps and one's vitality runs low—some white slope high up whose gleam in the sun gave the warning 'ice!' had for me a threatening or even a malignant aspect?

I have alluded once to solitary climbing. There is nothing which has been so severely dealt with, condemned in such unqualified terms, as this. If this record ever becomes a book (and I am now writing in entire uncertainty

about this), and if the book be reviewed, I feel sure that my solitary wanderings will be harshly criticised. So I will answer the criticism in advance.

First, I will state plainly that I consider that no one should wander alone who has not had a long and careful apprenticeship; working up gradually from easier to harder things. The most common reason for condemning solitary wandering is that a sprained ankle means a lingering death to the solitary man, and little or nothing to one of a company.

But the question of whether a risk is great enough for the unnecessary incurring of it to be culpable, or small enough to be negligible and comparable with those run daily in other sports or businesses, is surely to be settled by experience. And I have found this risk negligible.

A shorter experience has taught me that there *is* serious risk of a wrench when ski-ing. I would advise no one to ski alone. Indeed the company should be one of four men at least. Was it Count Henry Russell who said: '*To climb with a friend is a pleasure; to climb alone is an education*'? There is much truth in this.

If an amateur offers to lead a party in a rock climb, he is making himself responsible for their lives. The rope behind him may give him a sense of security; but, in general, it only ensures the death of all if he fall back on them. He must climb with as great safety as if he were alone. I myself found a solitary traverse of the Petite Dent de Veisevi an excellent preparation for volunteering to take, as leader, a lady over, with two other friends. And though I would not recommend any one to make a practice of solitary wanderings and scrambles, still I affirm that a careful and serious mountaineer, who has served his apprenticeship in a graduated course, is not to be

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condemned if he now and again seek in solitude and silence a communion with the spirit of the mountains which he finds evades him when the presence of two or more comrades carries with it the atmosphere of everyday life. The deepest impressions that I have ever received, the greatest healing and the greatest strengthening that I have experienced, I owe to solitary wanderings and solitary climbs in the Lepontine Alps in June, when mountains and passes alike were still covered with the winter snow.

And I have read criticisms in which such desire to be at times entirely alone with Nature has been called 'selfish.' Surely such criticism misses its mark ?

But there is one thing that I think should be condemned, which as a rule escapes any adverse comment. That is, lack of care in the making up of parties and in the assignment of leadership. Good-nature towards an uncertain climber, shown in including him in a party, may mean entire disregard of the safety of all. No organiser of a serious climb should allow personal considerations to induce him to invite an incompetent friend to join ; nor should a (false) sense of etiquette cause him to cede the post of leader to another when he knows that the safety of the party may be thereby endangered. I think that it is in this direction, in the formation and discipline of guideless parties, that criticism can do most good ; death dogs the steps of many a party of three or four, when the wary old wanderer pursues his solitary way in comparative safety.

Perhaps I may venture, since here it is experience and not personal prowess that qualifies one to give advice, to speak a word of warning relatively to the use of the rope. For I am convinced that, owing to an entirely false or much exaggerated estimate of the safety secured by the



use of the rope, amateurs with guides who are not of first-rate quality, as well as guideless parties, are often placed in very dangerous situations.

Wherever rock-climbing is an up-and-down affair, the rope, properly used, should make the party as strong as its best member, for he can 'nurse' the next man when he is leading up or coming down last; and moreover it is of great service in holding safe the first man down when he is finding out a way, especially if there be loose stones. But it should never be forgotten that, as a rule, on rocks the rope causes the unexpected slip of one to bring about the death of all; a fatal result may even follow from care not being taken to prevent an unexpected check in the rope.

Even when the upper man is prepared, he will do well to consider whether he could hold and pull back to safety the man whom he is helping. Of the entirely 'moral' nature of the help that the rope may often give in *traversing* a rock-face, there is no need to speak.

But it may not be superfluous to point out that, even where the rope can be hitched so as to hold a man who falls, there can hardly be said to be 'safety' if the man is likely to be too much injured to go further, nor if he cannot be recovered from a hanging position.

And yet another point. An ordinary, even a good guide is very unwilling to spend time and trouble in rearranging a party during a climb.

I once expressed to the old veteran, Joseph Imboden, my surprise that guides kept to the order 'guide—amateur—guide' under all conditions. I suggested that when the leading guide was cutting his way up an ice couloir, he was not in condition to withstand any jerk given by the amateur (often a novice) below him; and that the second

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guide at the end could not 'nurse' the latter. Imboden told me that he had often, in such situations, put the traveller last; the second guide being then above the traveller and free to 'nurse' him.

My point here is that climbers should see that the order on the rope be changed if greater safety can thereby be attained; not shirking the small trouble involved.

Take again the common dictum that 'with a rope, a party of three are perfectly safe on a covered glacier.' This is by no means true, even if we assume that enough is known of the glacier, and that its system of crevasses is simple enough for the party to make certain that they are crossing these last at right angles.

Consider two heavy guides with a lady between them; and suppose that the first man breaks in. Even first-rate guides may break in badly if the lateness of the hour or the prevalence of a warm wind has made the snow rotten. If he gets head-below and the rope cuts in, what is to happen? The chances are that the second man can do no more than hold on; while the first man, half choked, in pain, and swinging in empty space with a roof of ice and snow above him, becomes more and more helpless each moment.

The point I would make here is that 'safety' does not mean security from death at the bottom of a crevasse; the party may be secured from this by means of the rope, and yet maiming through frost-bite, or even a lingering death, may result from the party's inability to extricate itself from its fix.

Many a time, when forced to traverse a covered glacier with one guide alone, have I placed the guide, who was far stronger than myself, last; for there was at least a good chance that he could whip the lighter man back into

safety. But a lady through her lack of strength, and many an amateur through the same cause or through negligence, would certainly not afford 'first aid' to the leading guide.

It is, of course, the getting head-under on the part of an end man that may bring about a hopeless fix ; and the danger is so well known that at least two 'spare-rope systems' have been devised with a view to extrication. The moral of it all is ; use the rope intelligently as a help, but place no blind faith in it, and remember that, even if the rope averts a sudden death, that is of no use if you can't get home again.

## CHAPTER II

When I was young?—Ah, woful when!  
 Ah! for the change 'twixt Now and Then!

Life is but thought; so think I will  
 That Youth and I are house-mates still.

*S. T. Coleridge.*

FIRST INTRODUCTION TO SWITZERLAND, 1880 AND 1882

FROM 1872 to 1879, as a sixth-form boy at Rugby and an undergraduate at Oxford, I had found Exmoor and its trout-fishing all that was needed when the much-desired summer vacation came round.

Behind boys and undergraduates sits no black care; and, with the first sight of the moor and the first whiff of the peat smoke, the slight troubles and worries of school, and later on the anxieties about Honours, seemed very far away. What memories that peat smoke brings back to me even now! Long days with the rod up 'the meadows,' or by Southam Wood, or in lonelier Bagworthy and Chalk-stream valleys (my memories go back to 1872 when all from Leeford upward was as yet unknown and quite unspoilt); picnics with our friends (Exmoor gave us these too, and we keep them still) on the moor, in the woods, or on the coast; the return in the dusk, and the songs, those glees and catches and the rarer solo that soared sweet and clear above the hushed and darkening valley; never have there been days like these again, never has there been a glamour about any

place as there was about Brendon and Exmoor; *we were young*—it all lies in that.

‘Sober certainty of waking bliss’ we may find in the chosen haunts of our maturer years; but it is only when we bring back to our mental vision (and a mere sound or scent can do it still) the holiday land of our irresponsible young days that we seem almost ‘to touch with our fingertips the ivory gate and golden,’ only then that we seem to hear the ‘horns of Elf-land faintly blowing.’ It is a spirit land that interpenetrates the visible land; we may in later years revisit the latter, but the former eludes us—we have lost the key to it.

In February 1880 I plunged into the worries of real life, taking a mastership at Cheltenham. And I soon found that I *was* saddled with black cares that I should hardly be able to throw off under the benign but too gentle influence of my beloved Exmoor.

Fortunately, when the summer vacation drew near, my friend Heaton<sup>1</sup> suggested that I should join him at Wäggis, a quiet little place (it was *very* quiet then) lying at the foot of the Rigi on the Lake of Luzern.

It seemed to me a great adventure. At Rugby, from the age of rather under fourteen upward, I had had but one lesson a week in French; and that was devoted to translation. Especially do I remember attempting to translate the poems of Edgar Quinet. Trusting to memory alone, I should say that Edgar Quinet had a very high opinion of Napoleon the First, and tried to please him (after death I believe) by calling him an Eagle, and representing him as perched on a pyramid. At any rate, the

<sup>1</sup> Now for many years Professor of Mathematics and Physics in University College, Nottingham.

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phrases that I had learned were highly poetical, and were studded with pyramids and eagles.

For purposes of travel, then, my Rugby French was of no use to me ; eagles and pyramids don't appeal to guards and douaniers. So I had provided myself with a few more practical sentences. My stand-by was, I think, '*J'ai des bagages enregistrés de Londres à Lucerne ; faut-il l'examiner ici ?*' I hoped so to work with this as to avoid leaving my bag behind anywhere.

Of German, I knew no word ; with me it had been a choice between German *or* Science (for two hours per week) ; and I had chosen Science, as it sounded nicer.

So I started off abroad for the first time at the end of July 1880, making for Luzern by Ostend, Brussels, and Basel. I dimly remember how strange the foreign ways and dress and speech seemed to me. I am sure that I was very much in a minority ; I do not remember other English, and I remember how my fellow-passengers amused themselves at my expense when they found that I was an Englishman, and spoke no other language, and how contemptuously a military-looking German official treated me — 'Ach ! Bah ! Englisch !'

I remember too that the guard seemed to have a risky time of it. He climbed along the foot-boards of the train as it rushed along at night, and one had visions of a pale face looking in to see that all was well.

Basel was reached. Great doubt as to whether I ought to see my luggage examined ; greater uncertainty as to where I should go to see this done ; total inability to get my doubts and uncertainties resolved by the Officials ! None talked English.

I tried my sentence : '*J'ai des bagages . . .*' etc., on one after another. Whether they understood me or not I don't

know to this day ; but as I could not understand any answer made to me, this did not much matter.

The net result was that, when I got to Luzern, where Heaton met me, we found no luggage. With what awe I listened to him talking German to the officials ; and how truly foreign appeared my luggage ticket when I found it was a *Schein* !

Our pension at Wäggis, the Pension Zimmermann-Schürch, was a quiet little place on the lake ; the pension of five francs included the use of the bathing-house, and an extra one franc per week the use of the hotel boat. Our nice landlady and her daughter waited on us, and often conversed with one or other of the guests the while ; there were but twelve of us all told. We rowed on the lake, crossing sometimes to Matt to drink a glass of perry, fished (with no success), walked up the Rigi and Pilatus, and went excursions on the lake in the steamers. I find a note in my diary to the effect that, for views as well as for its own character, Pilatus 'beats the Rigi hollow.' We were the only English at the pension, and I do not remember coming across others in our walks close to Wäggis.

On August 12th, after about ten days of this quiet life, we set out, for what appeared to me to be a very ambitious round with knapsacks, intending this to last nearly three weeks.

I was singularly ill-equipped for a walking tour, if I judge by my present standard ; but I was quite content then.

We did not wish to attract attention ; and so we neither of us wore knickerbocker suits. Ordinary coats, waistcoats, and trousers ; ordinary walking boots ; common walking-sticks. For maps, we had Baedeker's only. My compass, knife, and microscope were soon lost ; I had not a buttoned pocket, and I carried my coat.

So we set out for our round, aiming at Gimmelwald (near Mürren) as a half-way house where we should make a longer halt ; proceeding by Flüelen, the Surenen pass to Engelberg, the Joch pass to Innertkirchen, the Grosse Scheidegg to the Schwarzwald inn (then a small wooden house), over the Faulhorn to Grindelwald, over the Männlichen to Lauterbrunnen, and so up to the Schilthorn inn at Gimmelwald.

I wish that memory kept a firmer grip on things ! But were I able to, and did I, picture truly my impressions of this first sight of Switzerland, and later of my earlier climbs, I suppose that three volumes, not one, would be needed to contain my 'Recollections.' Only some memories will I give.

We were light of purse in those days, and travelled (I suspect) much as many German students travel. But the interest, the wonder at everything, and the enjoyment, were such as can never come again ; princes (of climbing) might well have envied us. And my first sight of a snow mountain ! The memory is faint now. But still I can say that I was strongly stirred by a new feeling—something was born in me (and it lives still) when, after arriving in mist and rain at Engelberg I awoke next morning to see Titlis, clothed in the purest new snow, lit up by the morning sun.

I remember too my first glacier, the Rosenlaui glacier. It was of 'huge blocks of snow-crueted ice shining through with a green light' ; so I say in my diary. I was fortunate not to see first such a glacier as the Z'mutt, with its stones and its dirt.

Strong too was the impression produced by the Jungfrau as we passed along the Wengen-alp path ; it was a day of huge avalanches. And most sublime and heaven-aspiring



seemed the giants viewed from the Faulhorn and Männlichen; for mist wrapped their bases and lent them additional height and remoteness.

At the little inn at Gimmelwald, where the pension was five francs and two of our hostesses waited on us, and where we had a tea-supper instead of dinner, we made friends and went many pleasant excursions. We climbed no heights (save the Schilthorn); we only looked at the mountains. But what matter? I see more than once, in faded ink, the record—‘*a perfect expedition.*’

It was on leaving Gimmelwald that our really venture-some walk came off. For we contracted with an old cow-herd (or hunter?), for twenty francs, to take us over the Tschingel pass. Of axes and ropes neither he nor we knew anything!

So on the afternoon of August 26, 1880, we set off for the dirty little chalet on the Oberer Steinberg. I trust there is a better inn there now; worse, it could not be.

I remember, by the way, that in the evening there passed us, bound for Lauterbrunnen we supposed, an impressive band of men; big boots, gaiters, ropes, and ice axes. I had never seen climbers before, nor any of their gear. I cannot now recover the feeling, being somewhat blasé; but I do know that I regarded with awe, reverence, and a sort of despairing envy these men who carried axes, and shook the earth with the steadfast tramp-tramp of their big-nailed boots.

We started in the dim light of a cloudy morning at 4.30 A.M. next day.

We trotted docilely after our guide; up some rocks, along moraines, and over snow, hopping over crevasses where necessary. On the pass the mist hung low.

We did not learn much; indeed we almost learned that

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'a rope is not needed over a covered glacier'; only Dr. Fry soon corrected *that* impression when I returned to Cheltenham.

But one lesson I did learn; and I will quote it from my diary:—'With at all a bright day, SPECTACLES ARE NECESSARY' (on snow). We had none with us; but luckily the day was cloudy.

The Gasteren Thal (I won't write Tal!) with its gloomy walls impressed us much.

After some lunch at the Bear inn we set off up the Gemmi; a piece of work, coming as it did after much unaccustomed toil in unsuitable boots, almost beyond our strength. I remember how exhausted we were at the Schwarenbach inn. With the aid of tea taken in there, however, we managed to reach the Gemmi hotel. We had had a twelve hours' day.

Next morning, early, I saw for the first time the Valais peaks. Little did I think then that I should one day know them so well. We descended to Leuk, took train to Mörel, and slept at the Hôtel des Alpes. I remember even now the litre of open white wine! Next day came a terrible tramp; it caused me to take an oath, which I have kept with an even mind, that never again would I walk up a valley coach road if I could possibly drive. For *we walked from Mörel to Wassen!* And, worst of all, much of the tramp was done in macintoshes.

We found the St. Gothard valley converted for the time into an Italian valley by the Italian workers at the St. Gothard railway. The boring-machines were driven by air that was compressed by water power; and the magnitude of the whole undertaking, which was in truth beyond our grasp, was indicated by the fact that the details, the damming up and conducting of the water used to

compress the air, themselves appeared to us to be great works.

The Ochs hotel at Wassen received us hospitably, and we recorded our gratitude. The other day (so to speak) I was there, and found it full of Italian visitors brought by the railway that we had seen under construction ; but the comfort remained unchanged ; and I found our old entry that bore witness to it in 1880.

This virtually ended my first experience of Switzerland at Wäggis. When we reached it again we did little ; and of a return home by the Rhine I say nothing, save that it was the experience that first convinced me that one should always take the lower scenery before the higher. Remembrances of the snow mountains, and the feeling of oppression that one experiences on descending from the colder and rarer air of the heights to the heat and denser air below, spoiled the Rhine for me ; as, later, the Italian lakes were spoiled to us when we took them after the snow mountains of Tirol.

In the summer of 1881 my brother came home from the Argentine for the first time for thirteen years, and we all went to Exmoor. But, as I have said already, Exmoor had now lost its old power of refreshing me, and so, before next summer came, I broke down through overwork. The result was that, in June 1882, I found myself going once more to Switzerland ; but this time as an invalid with my sister to look after me. Still even this summer taught me more of Switzerland, and I will not pass it over altogether.

One learns a good deal the first time of going out to Switzerland for a long summer. In June the highest hotels are not yet open, and even those at 4000 or 5000 feet are usually empty and bleak ; patches of snow may be

lying about, and the alps above them either snow-covered or still yellow and unrenewed. I had uncomfortable experiences in later years, when (for a long time) my holidays began early in June, of general bleakness, of salt meat and goats' milk, and of higher alps knee deep in wet snow.

But, on the other hand, June is just the time for the lower places; they are not then too hot, and the flowers are beautiful. We found Morschach a good place at first, the pension being only 900 feet above the lake, and about 2100 feet above the sea. In July we moved higher, viz. to Stoos (4242 feet); and this was very healthy and fresh throughout the month. And at the end of July—before which time, of course, all the highest hotels had been in full swing for two or three weeks—we made our way to the Rieder-alp (6315 feet).

I was there only a year or two ago; and as far as I could see the old building still remained—with its charmingly home-like salon. In 1882 the de Sepibus family still owned it; but, though one must be sorry for the disappearance of any old family from the places where the name was once known and respected, no one could have suggested better hands for the Rieder-alp to have fallen into than those of Herr Cathrein.

We crossed the glacier to the Bel-alp one day, and I remember that I had some misgivings as to whether we might not 'break in' on the open glacier as on a pond! My initiation into mountain craft had not yet begun. But a round on the glacier with some friends, under the care of a guide who cut steps for us, made me feel that I was at last beginning. I remember the respect with which I regarded an elderly man who carried an ice axe; but this time I wondered whether I also could not do something—sometime.

Once a lean, strong-faced man (the image is dim to me now) came across to lunch ; I saw it was Tyndall. I wish I had had the assurance to introduce myself to him as (in a small way) a scientific man ! It would have been a memory worth possessing. Those old climbers did more than conquer mountains with alpenstocks in the place of the modern ice axe, and inefficiently-nailed boots, for they conquered the fears of men and the superstitions that clung about the unknown. And Tyndall took the mountains in a large spirit ; he had imagination and perception. I wish I had once talked with him !

The Rieder-alp proved a pleasant enough place. But, for my part, I have never felt myself to be really among the mountains when either there, or at the Eggishorn hotel or at the Bel-alp. I still feel myself to be in the Rhone valley, though certainly high up on its side. Very different is the impression produced by the arrival at places like Arolla and Saas Fee. To reach these you must make long ascents of side valleys, and the increasing grandeur of the scenery, and gradual disappearance of all that suggests the tamer life of the main valley, culminating as it does in the arrival at a spot where the great mountains seem to hem one in on all sides, suggest that one has really penetrated into the heart of things.

Certainly I find a charm in the places thus reached—places like Arolla, Saas Fee, the Göschenen-alp, the Engstlen-alp, Zermatt, before it was spoilt—which I have never found in those which are rather opposite to the mountains than among them.

Of our stay at the Rieder-alp there is little to relate ; but it may be worth mentioning that when we visited the Märjelen Sea we found a stranded ice block, left behind by the fallen water, whose height we judged to be over forty feet.

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Some notes that I have about porters are rather interesting. For porters from Brunnen to Stoos, a rise of about 2800 feet, the normal load was fifty kilos. For greater loads there was extra pay. I myself saw a man carry up a huge trunk that proved to weigh seventy-five kilos; and the landlord, Herr Kamenzind-Müller, told me that he had weighed and paid for a load of a hundred kilos! He added that such porters were old at forty. Certainly all through the mountains, in Tirol as well as in Switzerland, I have been painfully struck with the joyless, preoccupied aspect of these weight-carriers. It is sad, profoundly sad, to see human beings thus wasted; used only for the brute strength in which any drudge of a mule excels them, and destroyed, body and mind, in the use.

But to return. Between the Rieder-alp and Mörel we found the normal load was thirty kilos; and across the Rhone valley, in the Val d'Herens, twenty kilos was the limit. In neither of these two latter districts would porters carry more for higher pay.

It seemed to me remarkable that the standard of loading should vary so much in different parts of Switzerland.

August 19, 1882, was to me a memorable day, though I did not know it at the time. For it was then that I first saw Arolla.<sup>1</sup> How I haunted the place afterwards this record will show.

A dismal reception it gave us, as we arrived wearied out and in a steady rain!

After passing all human habitations, we got to the end of the world, and there saw an unfinished hotel sadly looking out on chaos. At least, under the mist that

<sup>1</sup> I see the chalets of Arolla put down as 6570 feet above the sea. I do not think it worth while giving the exact heights of the two hotels respectively.

shrouded the heights, we had dim visions of wastes of stones, rocks, ice, and snow, which might well have been the odds and ends that were over when Switzerland was made, and that had been pitched down here to be out of the way. So it seemed to us that cheerless and damp evening. Inside things were not much better.

We passed through a half-finished and most depressing passage, escorted by a very silent youth—M. Jean Anzevui (fils) has developed since then!—and found three sad visitors, one being Dr. Hort of Cambridge, eating marmot by the light (and smell) of one paraffin lamp. They told us that nineteen people had just left, having believed themselves to have been poisoned by verdigris. That night we fell asleep to the sound of driving rain and the ceaseless roar of the glacier stream.

My ideas were very confused when I awoke next day, and looked out up the valley. Where was I? Yesterday, surely,—or was it a nightmare?—I had come, tired and wet, to a spectral inn where a few silent and sad figures moved lifelessly about; beyond, there seemed mere formlessness, shapeless wastes of barren rock and snow, brooded over by the voice of invisible torrents that might be, for all I knew, the very Oceanus bounding the habitable earth!

To-day I looked out on a world (no chaos) exquisite in colour, magnificent in form, and pervaded by such human sights and sounds as just prevent nature from being too coldly sublime. Above, a sky of deep black-blue; sharply outlined against it the soaring outline of the Pigne d'Arolla (those who know it will remember how it lifts its head), and the still more beautiful though less lofty Mont Collon; their snows wonderfully pure and unapproachable to my happily unaccustomed eyes. Across the valley, a range of fantastic peaks, possessing, in spite of their fine-cut

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edges, the solid power of the mountains. At their feet, a picturesque wilderness of boulder and stream, not unmixed with fir-trees. And, closer to the hotel, rose woods of firs and far grander pines, where one could dream away a summer's afternoon as far from winter as if on the Frohn-alp by Stoos, and yet in sight of all the stimulating beauty of the snow peaks which are there somewhat lacking. And so we stayed at Arolla. And by degrees, as the wonderful air revived me, some inborn hankering after the mountains began to stir within me; and the duel between fearing and venturing began. My first experience was on turf; on Mont Dolin. I had always regarded turf as safe 'by nature.' But when I had conducted to the summit three ladies, one of whom was given to falling down at intervals through a weakness in her ankles, and we turned to descend, it did occur to me that a slip might be disastrous. On Mont Dolin I learned, once and for all, to respect turf.

Another day we went to the edge of the Pas de Chèvres. I had heard that there was a way down to the glacier, and my sister and I had thought of walking down it. But when we looked over, it certainly seemed as if the path had disappeared. It was only by degrees that I (new to the mountains) realised that the 'path' was really down that horrid-looking fifty feet precipice! The place fascinated me; and, leaving my sister at lunch, I came back to it and pondered over it. First I got a little way; then took off my boots and got further. At last I got to the 'long step,' where climbers now always jam an ice axe and use the handle as a balustrade, and here made a considerable pause. 'To be or not to be?' I felt that fear was gaining the victory; so I burnt my ships by throwing my boots down, and *had* to follow them as best I could.



To me the day was memorable ; not only because it was my first rock climb, and because I had conquered a very real fear, but because on the glacier I met a personage who was afterwards my companion in many a climb from the Aiguille de Blaitière to the Strahlhorn.

The glacier seemed ' thick,' as I said to myself (thinking of frozen ponds, the only ice I knew) ; so I ventured on it and loitered about. Soon I saw approaching, from the Pigne direction, four men. It is only the first that I need mention. Broad, very broad, and somewhat flat was his figure ; strange the fashion of his garments. The face was Tartar, or at least the features were not of a European cast. Uncouth in figure, mouth not firmly closed, of a type that seemed inferior to that of our own hardy mountain-men or seamen—no wonder if I failed to recognise in him the qualities that he afterwards exhibited in many a climb. To frequenters of Arolla in the 'eighties (he is eclipsed now by other men), a name is hardly needed ; and, if my picture of Joseph Quinadoz, as he first appeared to me, is somewhat unflattering, I feel that this is counterbalanced by the opinion that I often expressed strongly when I was qualified to judge, that for many years one could not well do better than secure his services, whether rocks had to be scaled or a difficult ice-fall to be passed. He looked rather curiously at the unexpected apparition of the *pauvre monsieur*, who was known to be an invalid staying at Arolla for his health, down on the glacier alone. And after that he tried to induce me to go up the Pigne ; but that was against doctor's orders.

I climbed nothing that summer ; but when I returned I had learned to find my way about, and had resolved to begin real climbs next year if I could.

## CHAPTER III

‘ Auf die Berge will ich steigen,  
 Wo die frommen Hütten stehen,  
 Wo die Brust sich frei erschliesset,  
 Und die freien Lüfte wehen.’

*Heine.*

## CLIMBING BEGUN—AROLLA, 1883

THE summer of 1883 came round at last ; and I found myself, with Heaton and his sister, at Arolla for a long stay.

Arolla again ! It is strange how Arolla draws those who have once learned to know it. One year I started at Zinal, and ended at Arolla. Another year we began at Innsbruck and explored the Stubaier, Oetzthal, and Ortler groups ; but later I found myself trudging from Pestarena, over the Monte Moro to Visp, and up the long valley to—Arolla. Yet another year we began at Chamonix ; but it proved to be only an indirect route from England to Arolla. The same when I started at Binn !

We were *very* warmly greeted by the Anzevuis at the hotel. I am glad to say that the friendliness which in earlier days I always associated with Arolla, and which so heightened for me the charms of that singularly beautiful place, is now as strong as it was at first, and will, I feel quite sure, last out my lifetime.

[For the benefit of those who do not yet know Arolla I may say that the Hôtel Collon was the only hotel then. It was, I think, between 1896 and 1897 that the higher hotel was building ; at any rate, it was still incomplete

inside when we went there in June 1897. It was a mistaken policy which led the Anzevui family to extend their old and somewhat gloomy building, instead of making another higher up ; but the old hotel, nevertheless, quite holds its own, thanks to liberal and wise policy of M. Anzevui (fils) and his kindly wife: 'Treat visitors so that they shall want to come again.']

It was a restful place. No clatter of mules, no streets filled with a cosmopolitan swarm, no bazaar-like collection of shops, restaurants, and hangers-on to the *Fremden-industrie*—most unlike seething Zermatt. Just the one hotel by the torrent ; a rude sawmill worked by the red-haired and wild-looking portier in his spare time ; a chalet or so that had always been there. The mountains dominated all ; and at the very hotel door one could enter the woods where the centuries-old Arolla pines and larches, the tangle of whortle-berry and juniper bushes, and the clear-filtered streams—here descending over rocky beds with the little rushing falls and hesitating pools of the tributary trout-streamlets of Exmoor, here flowing in transparent calm along a little glade carpeted with turf—received the wanderer and shut him out from all the world of man. The ancient trees with their huge, resinous, rudely-carved trunks, speaking eloquently of the long struggle with the terrible cold of the eight-months' winter, about him, and all signs of the desolation of moraine and scree-slope hidden from his eyes by the wood, the eternal heights of snow look down upon him from above the pine-tops. All this we drank in as we strayed uneventfully here and there where chance guided us.

At last came a day, August 11th, very eventful to me ; I climbed my first snow mountain ! It was the Pigne d'Arolla (12,471 feet).

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The view from this mountain is celebrated, and I will not attempt to describe it. I will only say that what appeals to *me* most in the views from the Arolla mountains is the distant view of Mont Blanc. One sees the huge mass of the Grand Combin Massif lift itself into the air comparatively close at hand ; but, far off, sublimely raised to heaven itself, is the great Mont Blanc ; the golden tinge to its snows lending it an indescribable air of loftiness and remoteness.

Let daring and restless spirits extol as they will the more intoxicating delights of days of adventure on the terrific cliffs of the Aiguilles of Chamonix ; but let none despise the calmer joys experienced by those who haunt the snows of the Pigne, the Combin, or Mont Blanc, lest they thereby condemn themselves as no true lovers of the mountains.

For my part I could never tire of the Pigne. What scenery can be more beautiful than that met with in the traverse, and what more varied ? Nor is it mere walking. No one who has led a party guideless over the mountain can fail to discover that there is scope for his mountaineering knowledge, though there may not be risk enough to call for anxiety. The last time that I climbed it (we were guideless), there was a guided party of two guides and two ladies in the front of us ; and through lack of skill the guides let one of the ladies disappear entirely into a crevasse. It was a mere chance that it was not the leading man who fell in ; and that might have placed them in a very awkward predicament had no other party been at hand, since the crevasses here are overhung.

My friend Heaton and I had not much to spare for guides ; but we determined to treat ourselves to a round

of passes, viz., the Col d'Hérens to Zermatt, the Triftjoch to Zinal, and the Col du Grand Cornier back to Ferpècle, and so to Arolla.

Beginners as we were, we had no proper equipment; ordinary summer clothes, common walking boots with a few nails in them, and alpenstocks. Joseph Quinadoz was guide, and Martin Chevrier (too ill, poor man, with a cough to get his guide's certificate renewed that year) was porter.

I would give much to be able to feel now the wonderful charm of novelty that everything had for us then. Our first chamois, seen silhouetted against the sky on one of the Bertol peaks; our first sight of the Matterhorn from the Tête Blanche, rearing its head and high shoulder, defiant and impossible; our first lunch on the Stockje rocks with that wild and almost appalling view before us—I speak as I felt then, and as I should feel even now if transported thither from my study by some Jinnee; even our first experience of appearing at Zermatt as 'climbers' (name revered by us!), tired and hungry but exhilarated. And, think of it, Zermatt itself and all its mountains, all that we were going to see, was new to us!

A glissade had destroyed a part, an important part, of my trousers (I don't think that I had ventured on knickerbockers yet, not wishing to 'put on side'), so I had to borrow from the then portier, a stout man, and wrap them round me in folds. But the Monte Rosa hotel was hardly fashionable in 1883.

By the way an incident occurred that led later to a confirmation of a view that I have always held, viz., that when a person says, 'I remember, as though it were yesterday, such and such an event,' what he really remembers

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is the story as he last told it, and the picture then called up into his mind. And if, when he first tried to piece his recollections together so as to form a clear picture, he filled up any gaps wrongly, then the errors will remain for ever; and part of what he 'remembers distinctly' never occurred at all.

As we were coming off the Z'mutt gletscher, we saw an elderly clergyman (*relatively* elderly) on the bank, and he asked us where we had come from. We said, Arolla. He remarked that he had a friend who had been at Arolla and liked it. I looked at him to see if I could judge what sort of men would be his friends, and ventured the guess: 'Is your friend by any chance Mr. Christopher Hutchinson of Rugby?'<sup>1</sup> He replied, somewhat astonished: 'Why yes! it is he!'

Some ten years or more passed; and I was dining one night with my acquaintance of that day, a friend later, when we chanced to speak of our first meeting by the glacier. 'I remember it as if it were yesterday,' he said. 'You said you came from Ferpèche, and asked me if I knew a Mr. Walker' (I think the name was) 'who was there, and by a curious chance I did.'

Though I told him he was wrong, and though he admitted that my version might have been true (since he *did* know Mr. Hutchinson, and did know that he visited Arolla once), yet still he was positive; he 'remembered it all quite clearly!' Yet my diary, by me as I write this, proves that we came from Arolla and had never seen Ferpèche, and mentions that 'I found Mr. — knows the Hutchinsons.' I did not know his 'Mr. Walker.'

The climax came when an appeal to his wife later on

<sup>1</sup> Now Canon Hutchinson, one of the race of the earlier mountaineers. Tyndall, I think, speaks of 'Mr. Hutchinson, a practised mountaineer.'

brought out a *third* version 'remembered,' she having been by the glacier also.

I think this is worth mentioning ; it makes one think over the meaning of 'I remember'—'I seem to see again.' For my part, I never trust such evidence absolutely unless confirmed by independent 'remembrance' on the part of another who has never discussed the matter with the first person, or by written evidence. When, *after* a person is known to have died, some one remembers having seen his wraith elsewhere at the very time of death, one may without offence suspend one's belief.

We took an off-day next day, and went up to the Riffelhaus and the Gorner Grat. No Riffel-alp, no railway, no hotel on the summit then. An amazing panorama to us then. Now (only how can one go there now? it is spoilt beyond redemption!) one recognises quietly old friends or foes, and the mind recalls comrades and guides, so many dead, so many dropped out of the list of active climbers ; it is a somewhat sad mood in which one stands there ; but the years of mountain life and comradeship that lie behind us are well worth the sadness. I will not quote Tennyson—a touch of his thought is all we want.

On August 15th we set off from the Monte Rosa hotel at 2.15 A.M. for the Triftjoch. We made a round to avoid parts of the ordinary valley track that Quinadoz did not think he could pass in the dark (he had forgotten the way), and so did not ascend the Trift gorge. We roped at 7.15, and reached the top of the col at 8.15. [For the benefit of those who do not know this pass I will just say that its characteristic feature—at least in my opinion—is the easy ascent on the Zermatt side over glacier and a little rock, and the tremendous fall on the Zinal side.] When we got

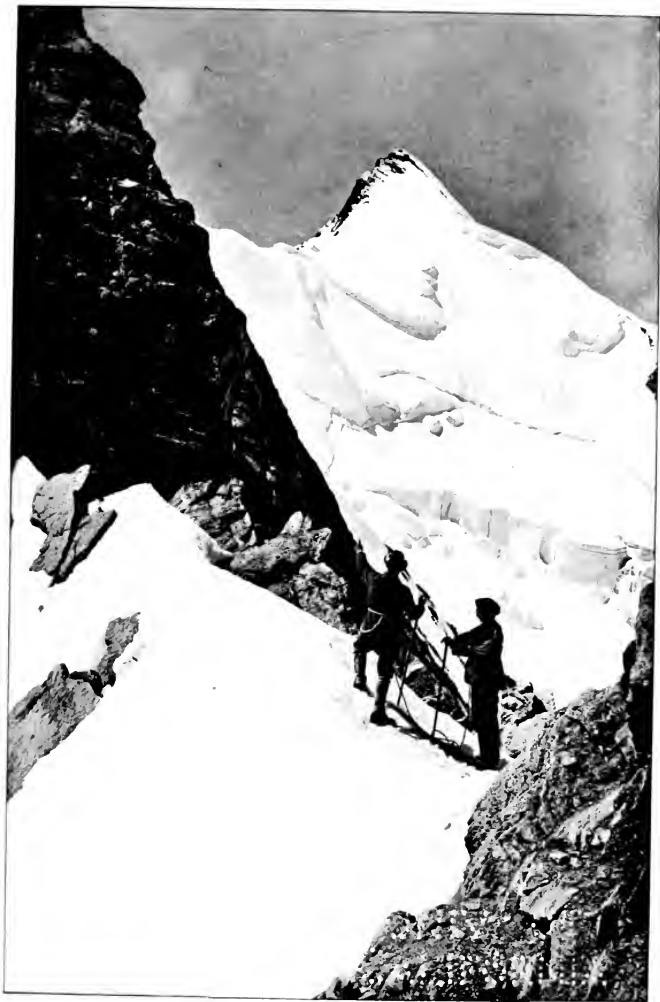
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there, a height of 11,614 feet above the sea, there was a howling wind, and the rocks rattled under its impact. Below us in the valley, and reaching away to the valley of the Rhone, there boiled and seethed the upper surface of an ocean of cloud from which there reached us the roll of thunder ; we were above a thunderstorm that must have been hanging heavy over the lower valleys. Only the nearer view was visible ; a vast amphitheatre of snow and ice and rock. From our feet there fell into this a fearsome-looking precipice, its ledges covered with ice and snow, and icicles hanging from their lips. Stones fell almost incessantly ; we hardly yet understood the significance of the sound, but it added to the disquiet that we felt. [In the illustration the easy ascent from the Zermatt side lies to the left ; the precipitous descent to Zinal is down to the right. The mountain seen is the Ober Gabelhorn ; but the double summit, forming a fork (*Germ.* Gabel), is not seen from this side.]

Is this description of the Trift exaggerated ? I describe it as it seemed to us. And we were novices, ill-equipped ; even the fact that we wore no undergarments and were numbed with the cold wind heightened the impression of the danger of the descent. And indeed the hesitation of the guides, and the doubts that they expressed showed that it would be no child's play ; with ice on the rocks, a wind strong enough to oblige one to hold on at intervals, and falling stones, the Trift cliffs on the Zinal side give the last man down a serious load of responsibility.

I remember a chain covered with ice that we could not use ; steps slowly cut ; and a cautious descent. Then Quinadoz found that he had gone wrong, had traversed too far to the right and put a greater depth of rocks between us and the glacier. He unroped and explored, while we





THE OBER-GABELHORN FROM THE TRILL-JOCH.

NO. 1110  
AMERICAN

waited and shivered. At last, after three and a half hours on the rocks themselves, we reached the snow of a couloir (the proper one I believe) and hurried down until safe from the falling stones. [In 1895 a lady lost her life, through stones, on the Zinal side of the Trift pass. But in this case the stones fell from the Wellenkuppe, when they were already on the glacier below the pass.]

It was not until 1 P.M. that we halted on the moraine for lunch, our last meal having been taken at 6.30 A.M. We reached Zinal at 4.30 P.M., feeling that we had had our baptism of fire. We found that only two parties had been up the Trift that year, and none down; its bad condition, owing to ice and snow, was known. The mental vow that I then took, never to descend the Trift again on the Zinal side, I have kept. The terrors of the rocks (when dry) have vanished with practice and experience; but the danger of stones, that fall more and more frequently as the day advances, remains.

Zinal of to-day is not the Zinal of 1883. There was then one simple old-fashioned inn kept by Mme. Epiney. She asked but five francs for pension; and when some English suggested an improvement or two, with a rise to six francs, she replied that she was a peasant woman and did not wish to be more; had no desire to be rich.

She gave one real honey, real quince jam, and plenty of cream with these. Kind old Marie, with her patois '*drummi-bine*' (*dormez bien*) and '*Bonne annête*' (*bonne nuit*)—or something that sounded like this—was chambermaid; and I seem to remember kind-faced, simple young daughters who waited at table. The ruling spirit, Celestine, and the nephew, Joachim Peter, who kept the books, though much more modern and business-like, had yet caught the

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tone of the place. Read *Là-Haut*, by Edouard Rod ; Zinal was just such another hôtel-pension as that of Madame Elise Allet.

I had read years before the *High Alps without Guides*, written by Mr. Girdlestone,<sup>1</sup> the father of guideless climbing. I must confess that his adventures had impressed me with the wisdom of going *with* guides. Still, he was one of my heroes, and it was interesting indeed to meet him in the flesh and talk with him, though sad to find that he spent most of his time on his back. He was, I believe, disabled from climbing for eleven years, and was every summer at Zinal. [His first climb after this long invalided period was over the Trift with me ; and he let me lead, being doubtful of his strength. That was in 1889.]

Heaton and I slept soundly that night in the 'English church,' and our bill was made out to the 'Messieurs du Culte.'

After a day off, spent pleasantly in talking with, and strolling with, Cheltenham colleagues, Mr. Girdlestone, and others with whom I found I had links—how one does seem to know something of every one that one meets at these higher hotels in their early days, when only the pioneer-English come there!—we set off at 2.30 A.M. on a misty morning for the Col du Grand Cornier. This pass is seen to the right of the Dent Blanche in the illustration facing p. 236. New snow cumbered the ice-fall, and the labour and difficulty of making our way up it (it was rather ice-fall than slope at that time) was much increased. Quinadoz evidently wanted to get it over, and so we made no halt for food between our start and 9 A.M., when we had lunch some twenty minutes below the top of the col ; we had been six and a half hours fasting since a *very*

<sup>1</sup> Later Canon Girdlestone, and now, alas ! dead.

sketchy first breakfast. After that, all was easy ; and of the return to Arolla (which we reached at 4 P.M.) nothing need be related, save that on the way we saw and fell in love with the quaint little toy inn at Ferpèche. For ought I know this still stands unchanged. Delightful as the place in itself is, the surroundings are not such as to lead speculators to build a large hotel there ; and the erection of the Cabane de Bertol has brought Ferpèche's one mountain, the Dent Blanche, into the domain of Arolla.

Of other days with a guide we had but two. One was the easy 'Tour du Mont Collon,' which I will pass over. Our other day was up the Aiguille de la Za (12,015 feet).

The narrow Arolla valley is bounded and dominated on its east side by the striking and jagged rock range of the Grandes Dents, and most noticeable among its summits is the slender rock finger of the Za ; a feature that one always associates with the word 'Arolla.'

A steep hillside, glacier above, and then cliffs scored with snow couloirs, dangerous through falling stones, compose the face of the range presented to the valley. But if one passes over the gap of the Col de Bertol at the south end of the range and makes a round on the high glacier behind, one finds but a relatively low needle of rock to be climbed. Most of the route a mountaineer would call 'a walk up,' though the snow scenery and distant view are fine. But the needle itself gives a really good rock climb of half an hour or so ; and, in particular, there is a sloping traverse across a slab that is quite sensational for the last man down, on the descent, when he begins (as I did later) guideless climbing ; though between guides it was, even to novices, only a pleasingly exciting bit. For us, that day, guided as we were, the sensation of the day came when we were crowded on and

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round the summit of the needle, uplifted in space. I remember the Lac-bleu far away, showing like a turquoise set on the alp above Satarme.

After this we wandered guideless, attempting no real climbs. Rousette, Ghitza, the Col du Mont Collon, scrambles along the arête between the Pas de Chèvres and Casiorte, and along to the Glacier des Ignes, and lastly, the Pointe de Vouasson, all taught us something. Especially did we learn where we could go safely—a lesson never learned by those who always follow guides, however sure of foot they may become. We learned, though but in a modest way, to choose and to reject routes.

Finally I was left alone, and was then forced to begin that solitary wandering which more than anything else makes one feel the full power of the mountains. I will describe two of my solitary days in the mist and new snow of September.

I had then a strong belief in arêtes; they were so easy to find, and to return home by, in a mist. I have still a liking for them, though I have learned since the larger choice of route afforded by a face.

One day I set out (in mist and falling snow) to try the Zinereffien rocks, having borrowed an axe from the *juge* (Anzevui père). I hit off the moraine of the Zigioronove glacier (I give one sample of the spelling), and could not well lose it again even in that mist. A temporary thinning of the air showed me a most attractive arête running right up to a summit of the Zinereffien rocks; and I got well on to it before the mist settled down again. When I came to hard snow I began to feel very much alone; and huge were the steps that I cut. I took *three hours* cutting up to the top! And when I got there, all was white and still and impenetrable. A quiet fine snow fell; on two sides

the uncertain-looking slopes sank down and vanished into whiteness, and on two other sides stretched away arêtes. One led rather downhill in the direction of the summits that look down on the Pas de Chèvres, the other led upward to higher summits in the direction of the Pigne—as I guessed. I tried to get warm by building a cairn ; and wore my fingers nearly raw in the work. [I had had no gloves all that summer.] Then I cut caverns again up the arête, rather below the edge since I found this overhung. [How dangerous this was, I need not say here. My earlier scrambles, taken while in a state of ignorance, do not belong to the category of safe though solitary climbs made by a careful old hand which I have defended in the Introduction.] But before I reached the higher summits a small cross-cornice—some freak of the wind—met me and brought me to a halt. And now, on a sudden, there was a faint stir in the air. A tunnel opened in the mist, and far away and below me I saw a vision of valley and stream, the stream flowing in a vague and uncertain way uphill—as in a Chinese picture. It was a strange and sudden revelation that the rest of the world was there ; then the veil fell and cold white silence shut me in again.

I returned to my cairn and began to occupy the caverns I had cut one by one. But it was slow work. Now at that time there were snow-slopes stretching right down into the valley that leads to the Pas de Chèvres. As is always the case, these slopes, seen from the vantage-ground of a projecting rock above, appeared to be very gentle, and to end in a level plain of snow. Mist or no mist this is an illusion that can deceive even a very old hand. I tried a glissade ; but scarcely was I launched when my heels slipped on concealed ice, and, had I not managed to pull up on a rock, I should very probably have lost my

life either by hitting a block of stone or by loss of blood ; ice, even when not studded with stones as this was, has a terrible rasping power. The thin coating of new snow had quite deceived me. I learned a useful lesson—‘Never trust your estimate of the steepness of a snow-slope that you have seen only from above ; and never engage on a glissade unless you are certain that you will not come on ice.’ It was later that I learned how the lower part of a slope is often ice—the water draining down.

I had to descend the arête after all.<sup>1</sup>

Another day I well remember, too.

Again in mist and falling snow I set out for the Grandes Dents de Veisevi. Rising from the valley, nearly opposite Satarme, I reached the higher levels soon, and was once more separated from all human life by the thick white veil. In the mist I got within two hundred yards of some chamois ; the air thinned somewhat, and I got a good view of them. They were, as far as I could discover, nibbling at some moss. They saw me, and in a few moments were far away. I found their traces all the way up to the top of the Grandes Dents, and I noticed then (as at other times also) that they had a wonderful power of avoiding

<sup>1</sup> I have mentioned the Zigioronove glacier, whose remarkable parallel ridges of lateral moraine must strike any one, and I should like to say something about it. For me it has two points of interest :—

(1) *The old moraines.*—It would require more space than I have here to explain my reasons at length. But I would say that I would ascribe these old moraines to two variations working together, viz., a secular shrinking of the glacier that has probably gone on for hundreds of years, combined with pauses and *partial* recovery of magnitude of much shorter period. Both these variations are known to exist. Mere continuous shrinking would not leave behind a series of ridges, but rather a continuous band of moraine devoid of form.

(2) *A temporary increase.*—I have been fortunate enough to witness (since 1882) a temporary increase of this glacier. It was noticeable that the increasing glacier could not push back the last-formed moraine, but rose above it. This has a bearing on the formation of successive ridges of which I have just spoken.



the treacherous holes between the rocks, though all was filled up and disguised by new snow. The same is true of other alpine animals also, and with respect to crevasses and snow-bridges. Above Franzenhöhe (near the Stelvio) I once noticed the tracks of some very light animal over the snow-covered glacier ; and it had, as shown by my soundings, chosen just the strongest parts of the bridges, though it was evidently light enough to have passed anywhere.

But to return. If the Zinereffen rocks were solitary, the arête up the Grandes Dents was both solitary, and, to an imaginative person, somewhat terrible also. I cannot imagine a more striking, nay, almost appalling, sight than the precipice that descends to Ferpèche, as I saw it that day. Sheer, black, and deadly cold it looked in the freezing mist ; and threatening, rather than treacherous, looked the ledges, blocked with frozen snow or glazed with ice and touched with rime.

The top was gained at last ; but view there was none. The chamois had been up ahead of me ; how or where they got down, is still a mystery to me. Behind me lay the way home. Inexperienced as I was, I had found it none too easy in the loose snow, and I did not feel happy when I thought of the descent. In the front the cliffs fell steeply into white space ; and, to my right, there led an evil-looking arête up to the shrouded heights where Perroc brooded sullenly. But, as I have found over and over again since that day, the descent where the new snow had been trodden, and the footholds and handholds revealed, was quite an easy matter.

It was strange to find up there, in a solitude and remoteness more complete than words can describe, a link with the familiar world at home. In a bottle I found the name

of an old Rugby master, in whose form I once was, who had with his wife and two Evolène guides made the ascent eight years before. 'Mr. and Mrs. J. S. Philpotts, Bedford; Jean Vuignet, Martin Pralong; first ascent, Sept. 2, 1875,' is what I copied down and entered in my diary.

My time was now up. I went home by Bern, having a great liking for that picturesque old place; and so ended my summer of 1883—a summer memorable to me, since in it I first began to know the mountains.

I will add two notes:—

(1) *Sunset colours, etc.*—The brilliance and peculiarity of the sunsets on fine days, observable ever since the great Krakatoa outbreak, and due to fine volcanic dust floating in the upper air, were not likely to be noticed in the mountains; for, being usually down in a valley in the evening, one seldom sees a sunset there. But all the summer we noticed round the sun, when this was shining in the clearest of dark-blue skies, a sort of halo or glow of an intense copper-rose colour of singular purity. This was, we supposed, due to this volcanic dust.

(2) *Spectres on the Brocken.*—One sometimes, both in Switzerland and in the British hills, gets into such a position with respect to a bank of mist that one's shadow is 'thrown upon it' by the sun.

It is the sun's light, irregularly scattered by the mist, that makes this so white; and the intervention of a man's body gives 'tunnels' of shadow in the mist. The man himself looks down the tunnel of shadow caused by his head, and nearly down the tunnels of shadow due to his body and legs. Thus he sees his shadow in the mist; and the shadow of his legs appears to curve up to join the body and looks enormous. The halo seen round his head is due to reflection and refraction, and each man sees his own halo as each sees his own rainbow.

If a man be near his friend, he will look nearly down *his* tunnel of shadow, and will see it; but if some way off, then he looks *across* the tunnels of shadow due to his friend; and so, seeing a great thickness of illuminated and a small thickness of unilluminated mist, he sees no shadow. In no case can he see his friend's halo.

The shadows due to the body are convergent cones of *umbra*

surrounded by hollow sheaths of *penumbra* ; and so the shadow of the head (*e.g.*) is nowhere greater than the head. If the mist-bank be beyond the vertex of the cone of the umbra, no shadow is seen ; just as no shadow is thrown on a white wall if far off.

The impression of size (one hears of ‘gigantic shadows’) is an illusion easily explained. The illusion is perhaps more readily entertained because people are thinking of the sun as of a candle close behind them.

The clue to the whole thing (save the halos) is this conception of tunnels of shadow in the mist.

## CHAPTER IV

Only a hill ; earth set a little higher  
 Above the face of earth ; a larger view  
 Of little fields and roads ; a little nigher  
 To clouds and silence : what is that to you ?  
 Only a hill ; but all of life to me,  
 Up there, between the sunset and the sea.

Life's sorrows rise no higher than our hedges ;  
 The distant view has heaven about its edges.

*Geoffrey Winthorpe Young.*

ZINAL AND AROLLA, 1884—WANDERINGS IN TIROL, 1885—  
 SAAS FEE, 1886

THE summer of 1884 was not an eventful one. I went with a friend to Zinal and had some climbing there ; then joined Heaton and Leudesdorf and passed over to Arolla ; and finally was left alone there. I made an expedition or two with Joseph Quinadoz, and then passed with him over to the Val de Bagnes, and made for England. But little of this would interest the general reader ; and I will give only a few of my experiences.

At the very beginning I learned, at some cost to myself, a lesson in the care of the feet.

‘Brandy and grease’ ; that is the treatment ! Spirit hardens the skin, and thick grease, pressed in through the stocking, obviates friction. Since that time I have always carried with me in my knapsack a tin of saltless grease, and I apply this liberally on the first indications of rubbing. A solemn compact should be made between

companions, that any one who suspects rubbing shall call for a halt for inspection and prevention at once.

Soap is *not* good ! It will not act well without water, and water softens the skin ; and further, if there be already any soreness, the alkali in the soap is irritating.

Another thing that I learned was the difficulty in estimating the angle of slopes without an instrument.

We had passed to Zermatt over the Triftjoch and were returning to Zinal by the Col Durand. To us, descending this last on the Zinal side, the snow at the top appeared to be nearly perpendicular. Mr. Donkin (then secretary of the Alpine Club, and a scientific man) descended from the col next day. He told me that the slope was as steep as any he had ever been on, and that, measuring it roughly, it came out to be '*as much as 57°.*'

I think that the old climbers, who estimated and did not measure, would be surprised at this expression. It is astonishing how steep a slope seems when the angle is but 45°.

To those who know the Val d'Hérens now, a remembrance of Haudères in 1884 will not be without interest.

Heaton, Leudesdorf, and I had come over the usual two low passes (the Cols de Sorebois and de Torrent), and arrived at Haudères very hungry and rather tired. There was no inn there then ; but a native took us into his house. We sat in a room of the real old Swiss type ; sleeping bunks round it, and various wooden utensils hanging from the walls. The women sat at work ; and both they and the man, who kept his hat on, stared at us with round-eyed curiosity as we ate. We had two bottles of curiously light-coloured wine, and unlimited bread, butter, and cheese. The offer of five francs shocked them ; they would hardly accept three francs. I remember this light-coloured wine. Whether because it was strong (or new ?)

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or because we had arrived at Haudères very tired, I am not sure ; but, as we set off for Arolla, I at any rate felt somewhat dreamy.

Later on Quinadoz and I made an attempt on Mont Blanc de Seilon. This is a singularly fine mountain as seen from the north or west, from the Pas de Chèvres and Durand glacier or from the Col de Seilon and Glacier de Giétroz. To the east a ridge connects it with the mass of the Pigne d'Arolla ; and the lowest part of this ridge, the Col de la Serpentine, can be reached without much difficulty over glacier, here of gentler slope, here falling steeply. But from the Col de la Serpentine westward the fall of the mountain becomes greater and steeper, and from the summit descend rock ribs, cliffs, and ice-slopes, that give the mountains a singularly proud and unapproachable aspect from the side of the Glacier Durand. A long arête running south-west connects it with the Ruinette, and the steep slopes of this, often of glistening ice, seem to defy approach from the side of the Glacier de Giétroz also. From the Col de Seilon which separates the two glaciers, where you have gained height, this arête is more approachable. But, even when you have gained it, the summit, now lying to the north-east, has to be reached along a ridge that *may* be rendered formidable by an overhanging cornice of snow or ice, or, at any rate, may involve much step-cutting along a steep slope of ice where a slip would be fatal. It was by this route that Quinadoz and I were to attempt the ascent. That day there was an icy wind and a drift of fine powdery snow, and I still had not learned to dress warmly. Quinadoz hacked away with his ice axe, and the ice-slope to our left fell down, down, into mist—and to the glacier far below. At last, when we were only some ten minutes from the top, at the usual

rate of going, he paused and offered to go on 'if I pressed him'; '*mais je ne veux pas casser la tête!*'

For my part I was *most* anxious to get somewhere more comfortable again. He told me to turn carefully in the steps, as he could not hold me if I slipped. And indeed this turning round was awkward work. I was frozen, the steps hard and slippery and drifted up with snow, and the axe would not hold in the ice; we wore no crampons in Switzerland in those days. However, we got down safe, though baffled.

I pass over other climbs, and record only my last day, as I left for England.

On September 13, Quinadoz and I set off for the Pas de Chèvres. On the summit marked 2925 in the map we saw a chamois silhouetted against the sky. The 'Pas' was drifted up with snow, and its steep ladder of rock by no means easy to descend. A cold wind blew; and over the Cols de Seilon and Mont Rouge the snow was deep, coming sometimes up to my waist as I led with Quinadoz keeping a watchful hand (if I may use the expression) on my rope.

A very wonderful effect in this journey was the contrast between the wintry aspect of the mist-clad mountains to the south and south-east, and the serene clear blue-green sky (suggestive of an Indian summer), against which the mountains stood out bathed in sun, to the north-east. Some wading through snow down the alps, and we gained the Val de Bagnes. Next day I was eating grapes at Martigny in a hot sun; it seemed a dream, that traversing of glaciers waist-deep in snow blinded with the drift of icy dust! In such experiences and in such contrasts the mountaineer finds a great charm.

I remember well how, as we passed down the Val de

Bagnes above Mauvoisin, I looked up and saw above us the terminal séracs of the Giétroz glacier, whose upper snow-fields we had traversed, topping the cliffs and threatening the valley. More than once that threat has been carried into action. [I here quote from Simond's *Voyage en Suisse*, and I take his *toise* to be six feet.]

In the spring of 1818 (I believe it was) the inhabitants of the Val de Bagne were surprised to find the Dranse stream remaining low at a time when the melting of the snows usually swelled it much. Ascending the valley to find out the cause of this, they discovered that a fall—or two falls in two successive winters—from the Glacier de Giétroz had blocked the valley; the water from the snows and glaciers higher up had been dammed up, and a lake had been formed. Alarm spread, and the Government sent an engineer. He found that there was a dam across the valley 660 feet (110 toises) long, about 400 feet high, and 3000 feet broad at the base; and that the lake behind was 7000 feet long, 600 feet wide, and already half way up the dam, *i.e.*, already some 200 feet deep.

Energetic attempts were made to drain the water off by tunnelling. The work seemed likely to be crowned with success; but the water undermined the barrier, and on June 4th this gave way—and destruction was let loose. The water advanced in a flood-wave, some 100 feet high, and covered the first six leagues in forty minutes, carrying off 130 chalets, and a whole forest. Coming out into a wider part where Bagne is situated, the water ‘pushed before it as it were a moving mountain of all sorts of debris, 300 feet high, from which ascended a black and thick smoke as of a conflagration.’ From Bagne to Martigny, a distance of four leagues, it swept in fifty minutes, and carried off thirty-five houses, eight mills, and ninety-five



barns. The loss of human and animal life so far was small, as the valley had been warned. In Martigny 'only' thirty-four persons were killed; but much good pasture was quite spoilt by the deposit of rubble and rocks. In this wide flat region the flood-water spread out, and we will not follow it further.

It is supposed that a similar disaster occurred in 1595.

The few ice columns crowning the cliffs now, and the little heap of crumbled ice below, hardly suggest such a catastrophe. The heroic age of glaciers is passed; but it may come again.

The season of 1885 was for me one of free wandering far afield. Such summers stamp themselves strongly on the memory as a whole; and no doubt letters written home at the time are fresher and more interesting than those written from some, almost too familiar, centres such as Zermatt, where yet the climbs themselves are more exciting. But they do not afford good material for a narrative written long after, when only the dead records of the days' journeys remain. So I will briefly sketch the course of our wanderings, and then pick out here and there an experience or an impression for fuller description.

The party consisted of Heaton, Leudesdorf, and myself; and our plan was to make a round in Tirol, and to turn homeward by the Engadine and the Lakes and Switzerland.

We reached Innsbruck at the end of July, and began our wanderings in the Stubaier group. We slept at Ranalt; passed over the Rothgratscharte to Ridnaun, taking the Wildefreiger on the way; thence went up to the Schneeberg, where (as it was Sunday) the inn was full of miners smoking, drinking, and playing *Kegel-spiel*; from there over three small passes (the last two of which were the

Windachejoch and Schaufeljoch) to the Dresd'ne hütte. We crossed the Bildstockeljoch to Sölden, and thence mounted to Vent—one of the two 'centres' for the Oetzthal group of mountains. There we enjoyed ourselves much, climbing many moderate mountains such as the Wildspitze, Hintere Schwärze, Similaun, Weisskugel, and Ramolkogl, using the luxurious '*bewirthschaftet*' Sanmoar hütte and Hochjoch hospitz when convenient. We passed to Unser Frau in the Schnalsersenthal and so by the Vintschgau to St. Gertrud in the Suldenthal, the centre for climbing in the Ortler group. After climbing there we passed by Franzenshöhe and the Tuckettjoch, to Sta Caterina in the Val Furva, from which place we ascended the Piz Tresero and Cevedale. Then came a long walk by Bormio, the Val Viola pass, the Bernina, Pontresina, the Upper Engadine, and the Maloja, to Chiavenna; and after that we saw the lakes and made for Visp by Palanza, Macugnaga, and the Monte Moro pass. I myself finished off at Arolla.

The first thing that struck me in Tirol (I write of 1885) was the primitiveness of the country.

At Ranalt we found a little wooden inn where the sole attendant appeared to be the landlord himself, who never parted with his hat. In the evening he (his hat still on) played the zither, while I (in my slippers) and the guide (as lady, in stockinged feet) danced a mazurka.

There, as everywhere—even at the larger hotel at Unser Frau which had some fifty or sixty beds—the traveller made up his own bill. The *Kellnerin* came round with a slate and an air of business and asked each, When he came? Whether he had dined? How many pieces of bread? What meats, and 'how many times'? [*Einmals, zweimal, etc.*, refer to our 'portions.'] And so on. All statements

were accepted at once. Charges for guides were the same as for travellers, and provisions for the mountains were at the same rate as those consumed in the hotel. [I wish they would adopt this last system in Switzerland and Savoy! I have been charged there about five francs for a big loaf of bread; I once paid six francs for a bit of salami.] Such entire trust in the travellers' honesty was very pleasing.

A less desirable sign of primitiveness—one that recalled to my mind Gerard's travels as described in *The Cloister and the Hearth*—was the many-beddedness of the sleeping rooms in the ordinary inns. Five beds in one room was not uncommon at all. I was taking notes of places suitable for ladies, or married people, who wished to see Tirol, and village after village had to be condemned in my notebook on this account.

The eighties were before the days of *bewirthschaftet* huts in Switzerland; indeed there was, I believe, no hut where even wood was provided. So the huts of the Tirol naturally astonished me. The Hochjoch hospitz in the Oetzthal group, and the Dresd'ne hut in the Stubaier group, at any rate, had bedsteads with legs—real beds, open wine, and good hot soup and cutlets, all at a *very* moderate tariff.

But the grandmotherly rule of the German-Austrian Alpine clubs carries things a little too far, perhaps. I *think* I remember a signpost 'To the Weisskugel' by the side of the Hochjoch glacier.

As to the Stubaier group, I do not think it is likely to attract climbers. I may return to it in my old age—that would be, alas! soon—because it is Tirol, and the walks are easy and not long; but I certainly did not find it a climbing place, nor much of a region for ice or snow.

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The Oetzthal was different. *There* we found a real snow group. And I think that guideless climbers, learning their work, might do worse than practise there. The views in this group are fine. Writing in the *Alpine Journal*, Mr. R. Starr says of the Wildspitze: 'The Spitz overlooks some of the mightiest snow plains in the entire Alpine chain viz., the Vernagt, Gepatsch, and Hintereis glaciers, crowned by the Weisskugel.'

But the Ortler group is *the* snow group of Tirol! We put up at the (then) only hotel, kept by the sisters of the Curé Herr Eller. The old man sat at the head of the table in his velvet skull-cap, and (daily?) related his one story of a party that came to grief because they climbed on Sunday.

One of our first walks was to the Schaubach Hütte. The regulations for the use of the hut were printed in three languages. Here are some extracts from the English version:—

### SETTLEMENT FOR THE SCHAUBACH COTTAGE

(1) The visitors are requested sparingly to use the inventory, and in case of having caused some damage, according to the tariff specified for it in the inventory, to indemnify for it the conductors, they being responsible for any single object.

(6) Before the travellers' leaving the cottage, the conductors are obliged to clean the implements applied. . . . The P.T. tourists are requested to control the execution of this instruction.

(7) Eventual complaints on the conductors' behaviour. . . .

(8) Any visitor (excepting domestic conductors) has to pay for one night on the bed of boards 50 kr., for passing one night in a bed 1 fl., for the only using the cottage by day 20 kr.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> I have come across other specimens of quaint English. A German officer described a skeleton as 'all knocks' (bones) 'and no meat.' Another German climbed the Dent de Jaman and told us 'when I arrived at the pin I became a swindle (*i.e.* 'when I reached the top I got an attack of

Soon after our arrival we 'did' the Ortler, an imposing mountain of massive build, the highest of this fine group, its summit some 12,800 feet above the sea, and, for some reason, slept at the Payer Hütte. We were thirty-one all told; and as we saw it from our berths after supper, the scene was picturesque. Groups of guides in Tirolese dress, or at least in dress far less prosaic than that of the Swiss guides, supping, smoking, and talking, by the dusky and sideways light of the lamps. The climb itself was very easy; we had crampons, and steps were already cut. To enjoy such climbs to the full one should have at the back of one's mind the noise of towns, the atmosphere of the Underground, and the scenery of allotment gardens;—*not* Grépons or Drus; these will keep. Then one will be happy and grateful.

Standing on the hard-frozen top, made of ice into which nails would not bite and that rounded off and fell away to infinity, I was glad of the crampons; and since 1885 I have rarely been without the little four-spiked sort in my rucksack as a stand-by. Feeling secure, one could enjoy the view; and a grand one it is.

Does there still prevail in Tirol that curious custom (I believe it was almost a regulation then in the Suldenthal) of 'two-and-two'? In 1885, even when two travellers hired two guides, these always made two parties out of the four; two ropes of a guide and a traveller each. Of

giddiness'). A guide wrote a letter in English to a friend of mine; here are some extracts: 'My dear —, you must not think that I have forgotten you, than I think very often on you and your beneficence which you have done on me. . . . I hope . . . to make together some agreeable mountains. I was quite satisfied with you on every respect from last summer, therefore I like to have some more days with you. I am healthy; the same hope I from you.'

Even the use of 'from' (*von*) instead of 'by' can make a curious difference; as when a picture was described as that of a scene where a hut had been 'removed from an avalanche' ('carried off by . . .').

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course, the guide had to assume that he could not fall into a crevasse.

Another day Heaton and I engaged Johann and Simon Reinstädler to take us up the Königsspitze. A Viennese doctor and his guide made a third rope.

That was a different matter from the Ortler! A little lower, and less imposing in bulk, than its great neighbour, this mountain as seen from the Suldenthal is even more impressive on account of the steepness of its avalanche-swept face. The route followed was over the glacier, across the big crevasse (called a 'bergschrund') that separated this from the steep ice-slope above, up this ice-slope to a pass called the Königsjoch, and so round and up our mountain on its easier 'other side.' [It is remarkable how frequently you ascend mountains on the other side to that seen from the hotel or valley at its base.] In the illustration the Königsjoch is seen to the left, the Königsspitze to the right.

It was a curious experience. We walked up into a frozen cloud. My guide and I reached the top first; and, turning round, we saw some dark object looming through the mist which I took to be the cairn on the Ortler, and my guide thought was a man—indeed it seemed to shift and waver. It turned out to be a bottle in the snow, quite close to us.

This mist covered us with rime, and the doctor's beard became, as it were, a mass of ice. When we had descended and reached the meadows, we found people strolling about with parasols up. Looking up at our mountain almost incredulously we saw it still wrapped in that chill shroud. The contrast between the two seasons prevailing there side by side was almost unbelievable.

It was in the descent from the joch—down ice steps on



THE KONDOPUTZE AND KONDOSCH, FROM THE SCHAFACHHÜTTE.





a ridge of ice, a furrow to either side—that I most vividly realised the use of crampons. For Johann Reinstädler, a very inferior guide, held the Viennese doctor, though the latter lost his axe and sometimes went down sitting; the guide went down shouting like a clown at a circus, and making a joke of the whole thing. Yet the best Swiss guide, unprovided with crampons, would not have cared to be responsible for holding a man there; for on that hard-frozen ice he could not have risked any leaning back. No wonder the old English climbers were (and are?) inclined to treat crampons as ‘unfair,’ like *pitons*; for it seemed a shame that a common peasant, as some of the very inferior Tirolese guides used to be, should be at once made superior on ice to a man of quite marvellous balance and skill.

Still, what of ice axes? Or rope shoes for the Dolomite crags? It seems to me that the use of crampons—perhaps even their compulsory use?—is justified by two facts alone: *first*, that without them a guide cannot truly take charge of the traveller for whose life he is considered responsible; *secondly*, that with them the time and labour spent in step-cutting on ice is enormously reduced.

We found, by the way, that the Head of the guides (that delightful and far-travelled man Peter Dangl) had recently made them compulsory for the three chief mountains, viz., the Ortler, Königsspitze, and Cevedale; there had been some bad and fatal accident on Cevedale, I think, in the case of a cramponless party. It seemed strange to me that he had not, seeing that he knew Switzerland, also vetoed the absurd ‘two on a rope’ custom.

We soon left for Franzenshöhe; and, after some unimportant wanderings, engaged Johann Mazagg and Anton Theiner to take us to S. Caterina over the Tuckettjoch, named after the veteran Mr. Tuckett.

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We were going to enter Italy, and so wished to get rid of our bags and send them into Switzerland to meet us later on. Mazagg told us that he knew a man who would carry them over the Swiss-Austrian frontier to S. Maria, I think, without encountering a douanier, and post them there. So we paid the man, and saw our three gladstones waver slowly off into space on the porter's back. A good example of trust, this! We had paid the man, and he knew that we were off through Italy to Switzerland, and should never see him again. Yet we knew we could trust him absolutely. I found mine safe in Arolla some two weeks later.

Of our passage to S. Caterina there is nothing of interest to say. We found S. Caterina a fashionable Italian resort, where climbing and early meals were unknown. Nevertheless, thanks to our host himself getting up to make coffee, we managed to get off for the Piz Tresero (11,820 feet) and for Cevedale (12,380 feet). The former had a very noticeable summit that looked like a pyramidal crystal; the latter involved a long snow walk, but gave a good view.

Then we wandered by Bormio, with its hot baths and many visitors attracted by them, and over the Viola Pass. I have noted that on the far side of the Viola Pass (away from Bormio) the scenery was very beautiful—trees, cliffs, tarns of fine colour—and reminded me somewhat of the Engstlen-alp. Somewhere about here I think it was, or perhaps between La Rösa and the Bernina, that I came across one of the sad sights so common (according to old writers) earlier, namely, a poor misformed stunted thing—hardly a man—coming forward with uncouth gestures and beast-like sounds to beg for money, while the family sat by the house and regarded us greedily. Four-and-

twenty years have passed since then ; but I have not yet forgotten the strange shock that I got. Was this a man ? was it a monster ? Ought its destruction in infancy to have been prohibited as murder ? Safer to leave these questions alone, no doubt. But, when confronted by such a being as this, one cannot silence the questioning spirit.

We slept at La Rōsa. Next day (August 29th) we went on (in rain) past the Bernina hospitz, and reached the Steinbock Hotel at Pontresina. On August 30, we had a walk that I recorded as far the finest that I had ever had, viz., from Pontresina, all through the beautiful Upper Engadine, down the Maloja pass to Promontogno. The scenery from the Maloja downward was wonderful ; especially did the deep-blue Italian sky to the south strike us as a background to the peaks.

Only faint visions remain of places never seen by me since then ; the walk to Chiavenna with the chestnut woods, the vines, and the picturesque Italian folk ; Colico and the voyage down the lake ; Belaggio, where our knickerbockers and ice axes excited much obtrusive attention ; Baveno, where we were (at the Belle Vue Hotel) hopelessly out of keeping with the style of the hotel, and the evening dress and sweeping trains of the visitors—there was a Princess and suite of some kind there.

At Palanza, the agent of the diligence competed with a private driver, and the latter won us. Further on this driver took us to lunch at an inn with whose landlord he clearly had an understanding ; and my note is : ‘ Among Italians one must bargain beforehand.’ The carriage took us to Ceppo Morelli ; and thence we walked on to Pestarena. In this village we saw an English notice of a gold-mining company ; I think the manager was a ‘ Roberts.’ At

Pestarena I left Heaton and Leudesdorf, and set off for Arolla. My first day's walk was to Visp; a 'terrible' long way. But the hardest work came next day, when I went by train to Sion and walked up all the way to Arolla—and that in a macintosh under pouring rain. From Evolène onward I was dead-beat, and had to say, 'I will reach *that* tree,' 'now to that rock.'

Wanderings and small climbs at Arolla closed my summer.

On Monday, August 2nd, 1886, I arrived at Saas Fee, my intentions being to make a long stay there and begin climbing seriously. This village, 5900 feet above the sea, is situated in a high-perched side valley whose opening falls steeply into the Saas valley. It is in the presence of a magnificent cirque of glaciers and mountains (the Mischabelhörner mainly); and when you look away from these you look over the Saas valley at the fine Fletschhorn group.

What a pleasant summer it was! Just the right kind of English there, and all in the one hotel, the old Dom. There was Augustin Supersaxo's nice little bazaar, and 'Clara's' small restaurant up on the moraine (where one got delightful tea, and jam, and cream), but otherwise it was just a Swiss village.

Place after place begins thus, discovered by real lovers of the mountains. Later, hotels multiply, and there come crowds of Anglo-Saxons of the noisier kind who play games and shout out each other's nicknames up and down the stairs. The native Swiss then look on wonderingly at our 'ways,' and tolerate us only for the money we bring. So one more bit of the original Switzerland is spoiled, and the old lot have to go pioneering elsewhere.

[But here is a secret. Go at the middle or end of June, according to the altitude of the place; and, though the alps may be snow-covered, or brown and sopping still, and the cows not yet up from their stalls, you get once more the old place that you knew earlier, and meet with a warm welcome from the inhabitants who have recovered much of their unspoilt tone during the winter.]

At Saas Fee that summer there were no disagreeables, no cliques. The mountains and the love of the mountains seemed to dominate everything; and, for the purposes of expeditions, every one was assumed to know every one else. There were climbs in abundance, as serious work; and, as a relaxation for off-days, there were glacier expeditions made perhaps in company with eighteen others or so, with exciting step-cutting. The latter excursions usually wound up with tea, and cream, and jam at Clara's restaurant on the moraine, high up between the two glaciers. In the evening we had good music (there were two excellent amateur violinists and several good vocalists), and once or twice Mr. Charles Dickens recited for us pieces out of his father's writings.

And what joy was mine when, one evening, Mr. Heathcote and Mr. G. S. Barnes asked me why I did not join the Alpine Club! For them it was an ordinary question; they little knew what it meant to me.

Of climbs up the Laquinhorn (13,140 feet)—a long day, I found, when done direct from Saas Fee—the Allalinhorn (13,235 feet), and Nadelhorn (14,219 feet)—this last a really fine mountain—and of scrambles on the Mittaghorn, I will say nothing; save that at Saas Fee the most remarkable feature is the great height, 13,000 to 14,000 feet above the sea, of quite a number of peaks that are very

easily climbed. The first expedition that will be of general interest was the following.

On August 16, I set off with three friends, and Emmanuel Imseng and Pius Supersaxo, to cross to Zermatt over that fine snow pass, the Adlerjoch, that lies between the Strahlhorn and the Rimpfischhorn. When we had reached our col we ascended the former mountain (13,750 feet). Thence we saw Italy in cloud; and later the sunset was coppery. Two very bad signs. I began to misdoubt the weather seriously; but guides appear to me to neglect sunsets, as a rule, and merely to inspect the sky about the time of start. We regained the col, descended the Findlehen glacier, and mounted to the Riffelhaus, where we were to sleep.

In the night, or, more strictly speaking, at 12.5 A.M. on the morning of Tuesday, August 17, I went down to see the guides, as I felt responsible for the party. We had thought of Monte Rosa for this day.

The guides, who were (by the way) being paid by the peak, wanted to start, in spite of my fears as to the weather and in spite of the fact that there was mist about. But when I casually spoke of an equivalent ascent later at Saas Fee, they came round to my views, and we decided *not* to start.

At 5 A.M. it was quite clear; but at 9 A.M. it began to snow, and snow, and snow.

I understood that there was one party (containing Herr Lorria) on Monte Rosa trying for the north summit, and another trying for the highest summit. The former gained their peak, and on their return rescued from a night out (and death through cold?) the other party, who had failed to reach their summit and had got lost. The former party had started at 12.15 A.M., and came in at 5 P.M.

In the meantime there was great anxiety about three (or four ?) parties that were said to be on the Matterhorn. No one who has seen that mountain when shrouded in frozen mist, and white with snow from summit to base, will wonder at this anxiety. [See the illustration facing p. 112.] Next day, August 18, we at the Riffelhaus had heard nothing of the Matterhorn parties who were on the mountain on the 17th.

We descended to Zermatt, finding snow down as far as the Riffel-alp.

At Zermatt we heard that at twelve midnight (between the 17th and 18th) two guides had come down saying that two parties were stuck on the Matterhorn ; and that Seiler had sent off seven guides to the rescue. Since I noted 'rain in the valley all the 18th,' I suppose it snowed all the 18th, as well as all the 17th, on the mountain.

We got to Saas Fee round by Stalden. Telegraphing to Zermatt we heard that there was still one man high up.

Next day, the 19th, we had the incredible news that one man, Borckhardt, had been left by his companions high up, and had died there alone. What appears to have been the case is that the primary cause of his death was unfitness, both in bodily powers and in outfit, for such an expedition under such terribly trying conditions ; while the secondary cause was that his companions waited irresolutely with him for a long time, and then went (too late) to bring help.

I should not do well to comment now on this sad and painful occurrence. But one may safely say that it brought home to many two principles of mountaineering : the first, that any party intending an expedition that may be serious should be composed of capable and well-equipped persons, or, in general, that the *constitution of a climbing party is the first thing to see to* ; the second,

that *an exhausted man should never be left alone in the cold*, unless the remaining of a companion with him entirely prevents help being brought, and so involves a still greater certainty of his death.

Young climbers should well consider these two points ; they are closely bound up with one another. Choose your companions wisely ; and then regard the bond as 'even unto death.'

Soon after our return to Saas Fee, Arthur Macnamara and I set off with Emmanuel Imseng and Johann Peter Supersaxo for the Weissmies. This is a snow mountain, of very fine form, that lies on the other side of the Saas valley to Fee ; and, with its 13,226 feet, slightly overtops the other peaks of the Fletschhorn group. We did the climb direct from Saas Fee, and took twelve hours over the whole thing. We went up in the direction of the Zwischenbergenjoch, a pass which lies between the Weissmies and the Portjengrat, and ascended the mountain by an arête running about south-south-east from the top. I have seldom, if ever, had as fine cloud scenery as lay spread before us when beginning the arête. The valleys were filled with clouds, but the peaks pierced these and stood like islands in a sea. Monte Rosa, Lyskamm, the Zwillinge, the Breithorn, the Kleine Matterhorn, Strahlhorn, Rimpfischhorn, Allalinhorn, Alphubel, Dom, Nadelhorn, and many more, looked very grand ; all the loftier for the cloud base, and all the nobler that their moraines were hidden. Of the Berner-Oberland mountains few were clear, but there were the fine mountains the Aletschhorn, Finsteraarhorn, and Bietschhorn. I think we saw the Bernina and Ortler groups also. And all this time (for it was yet early) the sunlight came pouring in, in increasing floods, over the surface of the cloud-sea.



Our summit was easily reached in about seven hours from Saas Fee. We descended on the Trift-alp side. It was fear of avalanches on this side that had caused our guides to choose the other route for ascent ; but we found the snow still in shadow where dangerously steep, and we could trust it.

Passing over some other climbs, I will only say that later on I found myself at Randa, with Maenamara and Xaver Imseng, after a long day over the Ried pass, with various summits taken by the way, and a very chill drive up from St. Niklaus in the evening. We were to sleep the night there, and return to Saas Fee by a pass next day.

From various causes (some bad whey at a chalet on an alp, and then the drive up in the chill of the evening when I was tired and soaked with perspiration, and unprovided with wraps), I was very ill that night and all the next day. It was like an evil dream ! Of course Maenamara wished to give up our pass for the day after. But even then—and still more now—I had begun to believe in long days out on the mountains as a cure for *everything*, and in mountain air as a better restorative than food and rest in the valleys.

So we set out after all ; and I slowly absorbed raisins (nothing else) all the way up to the Feejoch. I was weak, but certainly quite well, when I reached Saas Fee. One cannot answer for other people ; but for myself I can say that all ills and all weakness disappear if you only have mountains enough ; and that the best cure for weakness, nausea, and biliousness is a good round of passes with a knapsack ! *But you must not get chill in the evening.* Always carry a sweater as well as a spare flannel shirt, and put it on underneath when you change. If open-necked

it will not show above the waistcoat ; and it is the body, not the throat, that needs keeping warm.

After another ascent of the Allalinhorn, I had *the* climb of the summer, viz., the Portjengrat, with Xaver Imseng alone. This mountain also lies across the valley, south of the Weissmies ; its summit is 12,008 feet above the sea.

I did not know when I started that Xaver had never done this climb before, and that he wanted to do it because it was, as he said later, '*etwas schlimm*' (i.e. rather dangerous or difficult). We had breakfast early, and were off at 2.15 A.M. ; we descended into the Saas valley and climbed up the other side. At 5.30 A.M. we were at the edge of the Rothplattgletscher.

The Portjengrat is a ridge running north and south, on the frontier between Switzerland and Italy. We were to strike this ridge, from the west, at a point south of the highest point, go along it past the summit, and descend again to the west, into the Weissthal ; and so, further down, rejoin our old route. To me, unused as I was to really good rock climbing, the ridge appeared to have a precipice on the Italian side, and to be very smooth and steep on the Swiss side. I wonder what I should think of it now ?

Well, we crossed the glacier (very slippery in the early morning), and easily mounted a branch arête that runs to the west from the main arête ; I think it was that which has 3084 marked at the end of it in the Siegfried map. At 6.45 A.M. we had reached the main arête, the frontier ridge, which in this part was rounded and covered with old snow. Here we had first lunch, and a more glorious place for a halt one could not well have.

Then we followed the main arête towards the north, cutting steps where needed ; very easy so far. But now

began the climbing. The arête suddenly changed to a sharp rock ridge, and the difficulty was to get on to it, since the rocks stood up above the snow, and it seemed impossible to get on to them. Xaver was puzzled; but at last wriggled somehow round on the smooth and steep Swiss side until a sort of crack led him to the top of the arête. He was now out of sight; and I heard a voice tell me to 'come on.' It was all very well; but how? I saw very well how to fall into Italy on the one side, or slide swiftly into Switzerland on the other; but to 'come on' was another matter.

But I had to go; and somehow, much to my own surprise, managed it with but moral support from the rope. I believe one could make the summit easily by keeping low down on the Italian side and gaining the arête further on, though there might be danger from loose stones. But we did the climb properly.

It was as well that I did not slip here; as, there being no guide behind, I should have had a nasty swing down and round, and might have hurt a knee at the least. Later on he warned me not to slip, or we should both fall into Italy. I had always wanted to visit Italy, but just then felt in no hurry to go there.

We reached the summit at 9.30 A.M. and had an hour's halt and second lunch.

It was beyond the summit, north of it, I think, that we came to a queer sort of place. There was a smooth slab to descend, and a very narrow ridge to catch one. However, doing it this way, we managed easily with help of the rope; for Xaver let me down, and then used the doubled rope, hooked round a rock, for himself. We reached a second summit at 11.50.

As regards the climb after the main summit, I need only

say that we had several traverses, and ran some risk owing to the curious looseness of the rocks. I got rather a 'turn' when one big fellow—as big as a sheep—to which Xaver was just going to trust, suddenly took charge and, after two leaps, fell right on to the glacier below.

When we had passed somewhat to the north of the second summit we sloped down, mainly over snow, into the Weissthal; and the climb was over. We reached Saas Fee at 3.15 P.M.

This was my first good rock climb; and the route being of a traversing nature, and there being but one guide, I had a degree of responsibility that was decidedly 'educational.'

The summer ended with attendance at the great 'Fest' held in and round the chapel rather below Saas Fee. This is well worth seeing. Whole quantities of the peasantry attend, the women wearing the strange headgear of the Canton; and, if the costumes are not altogether pleasing, yet one sees that most interesting of sights—a mountain folk as they naturally are, and not as they appear when temporarily in the service of the stranger.

Since then I have been early and late in Switzerland, when no other strangers were about, have watched them at their dangerous work of bringing logs down the frozen wood-paths, and have shot with them in their village rifle clubs. But this was my first sight of the native life; and it, or like fêtes, may be the only bit visible to the usual summer visitor.

## CHAPTER V

They will scale the mountain strongholds that in days of old you won,  
 They will plod behind a lantern ere the rising of the sun,  
 On a 'grat' or in a chimney, on the steep and dizzy slope,  
 For a foothold or a handhold they will diligently grope—

*A. D. Godley.*

## CHAMONIX AND THE 'HIGH LEVEL ROUTE' TO

SAAS FEE, 1887

ON July 23, 1887, I started alone for the hotel at Montanvert (6267 feet above sea), above Chamonix ; my friend Heaton and the guide Joseph Quinadoz were to join me there a little later. On the way I stayed at Geneva, and was taken to see the National Shooting Fête, the Tir-Federal, by my friend M. Lugardon. It was on a grand scale. One huge temporary wooden building held thousands (was it 4000 ?) of people, and the chorus singing there was tremendous in effect. Tremendous too was the noise at the covered shooting-stands.

On the 25th the diligence took me to Chamonix. I went up to Montanvert, to settle in, on the 27th, and on the 28th I wandered alone up to the Jardin, a sort of grass island surrounded by walls of moraine, placed right in the middle of glaciers. Other rambles gave me some idea of the geography of the place ; and the magnificence of the scale of the snow and ice scenery impressed itself on me more and more.

In due course Heaton and Quinadoz arrived, and we settled on the Aiguille de Blaitière as our first climb. Taking the range of peaks that run more or less north north-

east from Mont Blanc, I think one may say that the further they are from Mont Blanc, and the nearer to the Mer de Glace, and the lower they are, the more difficult they become and the greater the fall of sheer cliff from their summits to the glacier from which they project. I have seen old pictures of the Charmoz and Grépon (the Aiguilles at the end of the range) in which these appear like to slate pencils stuck into plaster of Paris ! Our Aiguille was intermediate in difficulty ; its summit 11,592 feet above the sea.

In the hotel we had found Messrs. Wicks and Muir, and these, not knowing that we were somewhat inexperienced, and had but one guide who was a stranger to the district, had recommended the mountain and had given us some general directions, which I imparted to Quinadoz. They were, so I understood them at least, in the main :—

(i) First to get up (somehow and somewhere) to the main arête that ran from the Blaitière to the Grépon.

(ii) Then to ascend this arête to a certain point (uncertain to us) where we might think we were barred from further progress, but where we could fix a rope and let ourselves down on to an easier part of the route on beyond. We were to leave the rope hanging if we wished (as we did wish) to come home again.

Armed with these instructions we set off from the hotel at 2.15 A.M., and reached the Glacier des Nantillons at 4 A.M. Then came the question, which way up it ? Properly we ought to have crossed it to some rocks by which the higher levels can be reached. But Quinadoz chose to ascend the glacier itself, seracs and all. It took us a long time to reach the higher levels ; and we cordially agreed with Quinadoz when, looking back, he said : '*Je crois, messieurs, qu'il sera trop dangereux de descendre par ici ce soir,*' or words to this effect.



THE ALPINES OF PIAN, BIVIERRE, AND MIEL, WITH MT. BLANC IN THE BACKGROUND, FROM THE  
SUMMIT OF THE GRANDS CHAMMOZ.





Above this came easy snow ; and I think we reached the main arête at the col between the Blaitière and the Grépon, whence we could look down on the Glacier du Géant. [In 1895 we turned up to the arête before we reached this col, crossing the bergschrund.] It was now about 8 A.M., and we had a halt and some food.

As we looked about and up at the precipices, which were of a sort quite new to us who had been used to much milder mountain forms, we wondered how, in the name of Conscience, we were to get any further. However, off we set.

After a time, we two were advised to leave our axes behind, as things seemed likely to be steep all the way up. After Quinadoz had already nearly split himself once on a sharp gendarme that we had helped him to mount, we came to what looked a still more objectionable place ; and our guide, disinclined to make further experiments, suggested that perhaps we had come to the place where we ought to 'let ourselves down'—somewhere ! Now our spare rope was only thirty feet when doubled ; and as, to our unaccustomed eyes, the next safe resting-place appeared to be some 2000 feet below, we felt rather discouraged. However, there *was* a crack or ledge some little way down, and I had the (*most* unsought for) honour of going down last. I had never been in such a situation before ; and, though old hands may smile, it really then seemed to me very sensational. We then crept along the crack, and rejoiced to find it grew wider ; indeed, with the eyes of 1895 I saw it as quite a good place. It ended in a couloir lined with ice ; a sort of luggage-shoot that was only too ready to deliver anything entrusted to it, in a straight line ending with a parabolic curve, on to the glacier far below. Quinadoz cut steps down the couloir a little way, and then climbed up out of it ; and soon we were

back on the arête again. We had, in fact, circumvented the last rock gendarme on the arête instead of climbing over it and letting ourselves down from the top.

How we longed for our ice axes now ! The arête was here of frozen snow, and very sharp ; the steep fall on either side was very suggestive, and we should have to walk, *and wait*, in steps cut slowly by the guide, without any prop to steady us.

However, Quinadoz encouraged us ; he said : '*Si vous avez peur, messieurs, il faut retourner. Car, si vous manquez les marches, nous sommes perdus !*'

This cheered us ; so we decided to advance, and passed safely. As advised, though I forgot to mention it, we reluctantly turned from the easy-looking northerly summit, and attacked the rocks to the left. Here, rightly or wrongly (I think Mr. Slingsby told me later that it was an error), instead of climbing these rocks direct, we skirted them. This led us over hard ice that thinned and thinned until we were on glazed rock ; a nasty bit.

But still Quinadoz resolutely pressed on with his two little-experienced messieurs, and at 1.50 P.M. we sat for ten minutes on a small and uncomfortable summit.

The true mountaineer should enjoy such triumphs (for really it *was* a triumph that such a weak party should succeed on an unknown mountain of this quality) ; but for us two messieurs this first climb of the season had been a little *trop fort* ; and I fear that anxiety about the descent was my main sensation. Still, we did appreciate our success.

We had taken eleven and a half hours up, and at 2 P.M. we started back. The ice that we had recently passed was again nasty ; but the sharp arête of snow went unexpectedly easily, there being now no waiting for steps to be cut.

Then I descended into the ice couloir ; went up it on the steps ; and, later, went on to the rock ledge. Heaton followed, and stood on ice steps at the head of the couloir. Neither of us had any holding power ourselves ; but, thanks to habits gained in guideless scrambles, Heaton unconsciously hooked the rope over a *very* small point of rock, as, he told me later, I had done when I paused in the same place.

I was back to the couloir, when I heard a clatter and a ‘*sacr-r-r—*’ I flashed a glance round, saw Quinadoz on his back and wrong way up too, on the iced couloir, flashed back to see if I could hold anything, and then back again. I now saw the rope tight and Quinadoz held. He got round on to his face, and with the help of stones frozen into the ice as holds, he got up to the steps ; and soon we were safe. He had lost hat and axe, and was badly cut in head and hand, and Heaton had lost a nail I think. It sounds rather a ‘heightening touch,’ but I believe it to be true that we found that the pointed bit of rock that held the rope was *loose* !

Our guide felt his wounded head, and remarked : ‘*C’est la première fois que j’ai tombé !*’ Then, regarding the abyss below, he added : ‘*et, à peu près, la dernière fois !*’

I think that a stone had come out in his hand as he climbed down into the couloir, and so he had fallen backward.

I may say that on this, as on other occasions, it would be quite untrue were I to write : ‘I saw, to my horror, the guide fall, and expected every moment to be my last.’ There was *no* sensation of fear, merely the instinct to hold on.

Nor, I believe, are amateurs (as a rule) unnerved by such an accident ; they are already so ‘wound up’ that there

## 70 RECOLLECTIONS OF AN OLD MOUNTAINEER

is little shock. It is the guides, to whom, as a rule, the climb has been a mere piece of routine, who are most likely to be upset by such an abrupt escape from death; they are not already in a state of tension. So I think. But later, perhaps even for years, the amateur who was quite unmoved at the time, may have his sleep disturbed by dreams of the long-past accident; that is so with me.

Well, we went on down. But it was impossible to descend the now falling seracs, and Quinadoz did not care to try the rocks in the dusk. So at 8.30 P.M. when we were on these rocks (one avoids the ice-fall by using them), he said: '*Je crois, messieurs,*' (he always '*crois'd*' when he had something unpleasant to say), '*qu'il sera plus prudent de rester ici jusqu'à demain; à présent il n'y a pas assez de lumière.*'

'*Restez ici*' indeed! We had been going for some eighteen and a half hours; '*ici*' was a bare rock in the middle of a cold glacier, and we had no comforters, hardly a scrap of food, nothing comfortable. For myself, I as yet had not begun to wear any underclothes in 'the summer,' save only a flannel shirt. And we were tired and soaked with perspiration.

However, we *had* to stay. We sang songs at first, all we knew, and found that it was only 9 P.M.; just half an hour had passed. Then there fell on us a silence. I remember how slowly Capella (I think it was) moved from point to point over the ridge opposite. We heard the solemn thunder of falling seracs, and the glacier sometimes settled down with a queer grunting sound that we had never noticed in the daytime.

And finally we tried to find soft (granite) stones to sleep on. The guide soon slept and snored; Heaton followed suit later, but did neither so well. I couldn't sleep.

At 3.30 we tried to go on ; but only about 4 A.M. did Quinadoz find the light sufficient.

After we had left the glacier and were on sheep-tracks and turf, we met two natives of the Hausknecht order (not guides), provided with very inadequate gear and some provisions.

It was the RESCUE COLUMN ! A very short time after this, say an hour, we were in the hotel—at 8 A.M. All were rejoiced to see us safe.

Some *thirty* hours out, on a really stiff mountain, as a first climb of the season, is rather strong. However, we made up for it. Breakfast ; three hours sleep ; lunch ; three hours sleep ; dinner ; eleven hours sleep ;—that was our record.

[Some explanation of the illustration may be of interest. We mounted over the broken névé to the col seen to the left. Then we went up the arête of rocks interspersed with snow until we nearly reached a rocky tower that is seen (but it is difficult to separate it from its background) up against the cliffs behind. We desired then to reach the sharp snow arête that is seen to the right of this. To do this, we crept across the face of the tower ; and it was here that, on our way down, we nearly fell down the terrific precipices in the centre of the illustration.

It was on the sharp snow arête to the right of this tower that Quinadoz warned us not to slip. The snow arête still more to the right leads to the lower north peak ; and we turned away from this and climbed the highest of the rocky southern summits to the left. A higher summit still more to the left belongs to the Aiguille du Plan ; while the distant peak (triple) between the north and south summits of the Blaitière is the Aiguille du Midi. The lofty Mont Blanc is unmistakable.]

After this experience we took an off-day, and in the evening Leudesdorf came. On Saturday the 6th, either Heaton and I, or all three of us, went with Quinadoz up the Petit Tacul (or Pic du Tacul) that heads the Mer de Glace. We went straight up, mounting the arête that is seen from the hotel. The last part was not very pleasant, as there was ice ; and I felt rather unhappy as last man in some traversing over iced rock. The view of Mont Blanc from the summit was grand.

We came down at the back on to the Glacier des Periades, jumping the gaping bergschrund.

On August 8, we left Montanvert and started eastward (aiming at Arolla and then Saas Fee). The seracs of the Glacier du Géant were very troublesome, and looked likely to become nearly impassable later. A party with Chamonix guides was ahead of us ; but Quinadoz, though he had never been there before, after a moment of irresolution chose his own way and we got far ahead of the others.

In the old hut on the Col du Géant there was a bottle of solid ice, with broken glass sticking to the outside, on the table ; and yet it was very hot in the sun outside. The old stone huts were deadly cold ; that for the Blümlis-alp was just the same, there being ice on the floor.

It was strange, after all the snow and ice behind us, to descend on the Italian side on a hot and dusty path ; but so it was—from the very top of the col down. We slept at Courmayeur.

On August 9, we went over the Col Belle Combe and two other small cols to the S. Bernard hospice. A curious place ! The bedrooms were very clean, and quite daintily arranged. But the passages were very cold, and dirty too, and smelt of ‘stable.’ The only meat at dinner was liver, somewhat high.

But what are the kind monks to do ? We heard that quite half the visitors are so shamelessly mean that they pay nothing ! No one suggests payment ; we had to find out by inquiry where the box was, and found it in the chapel. We went in there next day, and it was deadly chill. Is it a lively faith, or the force of discipline and custom, that sustains the monks in this chill and cheerless life ? It seems terrible. We did *not* go to see the gruesome deadhouse. I think it was opposite, as also was the place where the dogs were kept ; there was a new guest-house there when I returned twenty years after.

I heard, later, that the people who die in the snow are usually ill-clad Italian workfolk, who probably have mistakenly 'strengthened' themselves with spirits before they start. And I was further told that the bodies are thrown into the deadhouses at the top or lower down, and are just left there ; not buried ; and that no services are read over them. I wonder if my informant (a man of Bourg St. Pierre) was right ?

At Bourg St. Pierre we took on Auguste Balley. He agreed to go with us up the Combin, and then to Mauvoisin and Arolla, for fifty francs in all.

Heaton and I went up to the Refuge with him and Quinadoz ; there was no Valsorey hut then. We two inexperienced travellers bathed in an icy pool when we got up there ; the sun went behind the mountains and we were miserably cold, having no towels. The night in the stone refuge (a shelter made with loose stones, under a large rock) was terribly cold ; and there were no rugs. We could not sleep at all.

On Thursday, August 11, we started at 3 A.M. and went up to the Col des Maisons Blanches, and then round to the south side of the mountain and so up the rocks and

some frozen shale on to the summit-ridge east of 'L'Épaulé.' We left a summit on our right, and gained the main summit at 9.45 A.M.

The Grand Combin is a magnificent mountain mass, and lifts its head to a height of over 14,000 feet above the sea. From its position between the great Mont Blanc group and the linked groups of the Valais, the view from it is very commanding. Like Monte Rosa and other mountains it falls towards Italy in huge rock cliffs; but on the northerly side, as is well seen in the illustration, glaciers and snow reach its very summit, rising in rough terraces.

I like the Combin! I have been up it three times already, and hope to go again before I am 'invalided out of the service.'

We took the usual line of descent (see p. 151) on the northerly side; and this took us down one of the rude terraces of *névé*, the 'Corridor,' threatened by huge ice cliffs above. Here we hurried, stumbling over the ice blocks buried in the snow; for ice may fall from above. [I have seen up-tracks buried under an enormous avalanche over which the return tracks passed.] We went round to pick up Leudesdorf at the Col des Maisons Blanches, whither he had been conducted from Bourg St. Pierre by the old veteran Balley père (who was, I heard, the first guide up the Combin). The latter then went home alone, and we five went to the Panossière hut, and so over the ridge to Mauvoisin. That quaint little inn, perched on its *rocher moutonné*, met us with a friendly smile (to paraphrase the German expression); we were well content to be in a simple Swiss inn once more, and we treated ourselves to an off-day of pure idleness there. Of our passage by the Cols de Mont Rouge and Seilon to





THE GRAND COMIEN FROM THE COMIEN DE CORRALES.



Arolla, taking the Ruinette (12,727 feet) in place of the former col, there is not much to say; save that when we had just descended from the Ruinette to the glacier between the cols, an avalanche of rocks came down after us out of the mist and caused us to fly wildly in different directions until the rope ran taut and pulled us over.

At Arolla, Auguste Balley left us.

On August 16, with Quinadoz and Martin Vuignez, Heaton and I (Leudesdorf had returned to England) ascended the main summit of the Dents des Bouquetins, from the hotel; the Cabane de Bertol was built much later.

The whole range of these Dents de Bouquetins form one mountain mass that, seen from a distance, is exceedingly impressive. Only two ascents of the highest summit (12,626 feet)—or indeed, in all probability, of the group at all—had then been made. So we were told in the hotel; and we found the two names given, Cust and Hamilton, in a bottle. It was a grand day out; but the weather was terribly bad, and we were not sorry to find ourselves safe down in the end. There had been a strong wind; and I noticed—what I noticed also on at least three other summits—that though on the actual summit ‘things’ howled, yet we had no wind; elsewhere however, especially in gaps, we had sometimes to hold on, and a tied-on hat was torn away.

From the Plan de Bertol, that morning and on other days, I observed the curved dirt-bands of the lower Arolla glacier, and discovered for myself (as I imagine others have) their origin. The Vuibez ice-fall at the bottom settles into waves, each wave I imagine corresponding to a year's movement of the ice; there being little fall of serac in winter, and much in summer. I suppose that dirt collects in the hollows of these waves. At any rate,

the dirt-bands start at the base of the ice fall, and the curving is produced by the unequal velocities in the ice of the glacier as it descends, the centre moving faster than the sides. [See Frontispiece].

One interesting feature of our stay at Arolla this time was the presence of Professor Huxley who was there with Mrs. Huxley, his daughter, and son-in-law. He was so accessible to all, that two Swiss professors who were there could not believe that he was really 'the great Huxley'; for, said they, he talks to ordinary people just as if he were nobody.

Our next good climb was the traverse of Mont Collon (11,957 feet) of which an illustration is given earlier (see the Frontispiece). Usually the climbers pass over the Col de Vuignette on to the glacier to the right (west) of the mountain, ascend the arête, seen in the illustration running up in the front of the more distant mountain, for some way, avoid the very steep part by passing round on to the rocks behind, reappear on the sky-line of the top part of the arête, and then pass over the snow to the summit which is seen in the illustration as a point lying somewhat back in the middle. The descent is usually made at the back, over reasonably easy but decidedly rotten rock, to the glacier behind; and they then return by the Arolla glacier, round the left hand (east) base of the mountain, and so down the valley to the hotel.

We however took this traverse in the reverse direction. The climb up was to us not only interesting and varied, but exciting. We spent a glorious hour on the rocks at the summit; these are, alas! dangerous now through the broken glass that lies about.

[There ought to be a law against breaking glass on the

mountains. Some one will have an artery cut, some day. I remember a lunch place for the Piz Morteratsch as particularly disgraceful.]

Then we made towards the distant Col de Vuignette in order to strike the steep westerly rock arête that is seen from the hotel profiled against the sky. The snow-cap of Collon, since shrunk, then overhung this rock arête; and it was by no means easy to get on to it. But all went well.

It was a glorious day. Like the Blaitière and Bouquetins, Mont Collon was a great advance on all the climbs (save the Portjengrat) of previous years.

On August 26, Heaton and I, with Quinadoz, passed to Zermatt over the Cols de Mont Brulé and Valpelline; and on August 28, I having volunteered to direct our party, we went over the Adler Pass and Egginerjoch to Saas Fee, taking the Strahlhorn by the way. I remember that, from the Strahlhorn, Quinadoz looked longingly at tracks leading to Mattmark; but I pointed out where we should go for Saas Fee, and at last persuaded him to follow a trackless course. Unemotional as he was with respect to scenery, he was yet struck with amazement at the magnificence of the mountain cirque dominating Saas Fee when we paused on the Egginerjoch or thereabout.

Two guideless climbs with Heaton and Gotch (who led us), up the Nadelhorn and Alphubel, brought to a close this season of 1887; a season in which I felt that I had made a real advance in mountaineering.

## CHAPTER VI

O hark, O hear ! how thin and clear,  
 And thinner, clearer, farther going !  
 O sweet and far from cliff and scar  
 The horns of Elfland faintly blowing !  
 Blow, let us hear the purple glens replying ;  
 Blow, bugle ; answer, echoes, dying, dying, dying.  
*Tennyson.*

GERMAN HYDROPATHIC ESTABLISHMENT, FERPÈCLE,  
 ZINAL, AND SAAS FEE, 1889—PFARRER KNEIPP AND  
 HIS WATER CURE, 1889-90—ST. MORITZ IN WINTER, 1890

IN June 1888 I broke down in my work, and went to visit my brother in Argentina.

I returned about Easter 1889 ; and, not being recovered, I went to a hydropathic place in Germany. But German ideas of a 'cure,' the diet, baths, and little walks in neatly-kept woods, did not suit me ; and so, decidedly run-down and weak, I made for the mountains once more.

July 30 saw me in Sion, where I found the Cathedral-Museum well worth visiting. And on the 31st I got to Ferpècle (5910 feet), feeling my boots and coat very heavy ; a bad sign for any future climbing.

Is Ferpècle much altered now ? I trust not.

It was quite unique ; so small, so simple, and so friendly. A nice little girl of twelve (long since married and a mother) used to sit out on the big rock with me and chat away with perfect confidence and unreserve, and her small brother tried boulder-climbing with me. The house was like a toy chalet of wood, not a bit like an hotel. There was

an out-doors douche-house, and you turned the water on by placing sods in a runnel cut in the turf. Quite out of the world; the stream of visitors flowed up the other valley, to Arolla, and this was a backwater.

I joined some others in the passage of the mountains to Zinal. We ascended to the Col de Bricolla and then circled round the head of the névé until we looked down the cliff towards the Mountet hut. The guides with us were shy of the descent; and so we kept along near the edge until we had skirted the Pigne d'Allée and could descend by the Col d'Allée.

Zinal was as yet unchanged since 1884, save that quince jam and cream had disappeared. The Mountet hut (now called the Constantia hut, I think) had been improved, and you could either use it as before, or get the guardian to provide you with food. This guardian had lived in New York; but he got home-sickness and returned. A change in life indeed!

After a short stay I passed over the Triftjoch guideless, with Mr. Girdlestone and another (see p. 34); and in Zermatt I met Harold Topham, who agreed to come with me to Saas Fee over the Allalinjoch.

We spent the night of September 2nd at the little Täsch inn; and it was so windless that I lay out among the scrub under the stars until quite late; very restful. Next day we easily topped the col. But the Allalin glacier on the other side was in a very bad state. Being only two on the rope, we had a nasty time among the crevasses, as the snow bridges were rotten. However, we got through.

Arrived at the Egginerjoch, the distant restaurant of Clara across the glacier, sending us waves of memories of cream and jam and tea, drew us; and Topham found some eccentric way across, I following him slipping, falling,

hoping, fearing—I was very very far from being his equal on ice unless I had crampons on and he had none.

I made friends with a very pleasant young clergyman (he is a bishop now) who had a firm and resolute face. So, though he had never climbed at all, I suggested taking him up to the Riedjoch. He asked if two friends might go too; they 'were great climbers, and had been up the Finsteraarhorn.'

Certainly I had not yet formed my principles! Now, I should never do anything guideless unless I knew my companions; and, in the present case, I did not know the way up to the joch either, as I had before reached it over the Gemshorn.

My clergyman's face had told a true tale; he was to be relied on entirely. But the two 'great climbers' were a failure; one was always giddy, and the other had weak knees. Both felt unsafe unless they faced the rock and held on.

We got to the top; but I dared not descend again with these two shaky men. So I decided to go over the Ulrichshorn, to the Windjoch and so home. From the top down for some way I had to cut steps; and my plucky clergyman, who had never been on a mountain before, came down last. Certainly character tells.

Other guideless climbs—up the Allalinhorn and Nadelhorn, to mention two—followed; and meanwhile September advanced, and the company at the Dom got smaller and smaller. At last only Bristowe (once captain of the C.U.B.C.) and his sister and I were left. We had 'weird' but very interesting wanderings on the glacier, on the Mittaghorn, and elsewhere, often wading deep in the new autumn snow.

The mist that often prevailed was no doubt composed of ice dust, and we witnessed very interesting halo phenomena.



Sometimes I noted a single ring, red inside and blue-green outside, some eighteen to twenty-two degrees in radius (I could only estimate roughly); sometimes a whole series of alternating red and blue-green rings that began quite near the sun. On one occasion I saw the single large halo change for the series of halos in a few seconds. Both systems of halos were best seen when there was a uniform mist.

When there were rather fine web-like or lace-like clouds than anything that could be called mist, I saw colours that were by no means arranged in rings or in parts of rings. Still the main colours were a rose and a green-blue; but quite close to the sun, so close that one had to look through neutral smoke-coloured glass, and almost swamped in the sun's glare, was a fiery orange; while a little further off came a pink-madder-crimson of singular delicacy and purity and a marvellously pure green, and sometimes a mauve.

Not only could one judge by the eye that the colours were not arranged in regular rings, but one could see sometimes a patch of one colour entirely surrounded by another.

Another beautiful sight was in evidence when the sun was hidden behind the Dom (the mountain) while snow dust blew from the ridge. One then saw lovely iridescent colour due to the ice crystals, where in England or Wales one would have seen only streamers of ordinary white light, spreading from the mountain barrier.

At last, on September 26, our landlord turned us out!

I will pass over, though reluctantly, a very pleasant stay at Les Avants in the autumn, and a still more delightful return there from Lausanne (whither I had gone later) for a week of luge-ing in December.

While at Lausanne I had heard of a certain Pfarrer Kneipp, and of the wonderfully beneficial effects of his

'water cure.' So I determined (sick men, too, catch at straws) to seek him out in his home in Bavaria.

My experiences there, and in Württemberg, have nothing whatever to do with the mountains; but still they certainly come under the head of 'Recollections'; and, as I think they contain something that will be of general interest, I will give them.

On December 10, 1889, I set off; and after a long cross-country and cross-lake journey (I see Zürich, Romanshorn, Rorschach, Lindau, Buchloe mentioned in my diary), I got to Türkheim; and thence journeyed to Wörishofen in a post-wagen. Here old Pfarrer Kneipp lived; and hither came people, even from far Berlin, to consult him. I do not think that I shall be doing his memory any injustice if I give my recollections of what I read or heard about him, and my own impressions of him. Indeed, since it is probable that at least *some* of the 'kurs' (or 'cures' as we translate), *i.e.* 'treatments,' that abound in Germany, have their origin mainly in the desire of the ill-paid medical profession to start a paying business—though, no doubt, all do good through involving a temperate and regular life—it may help to do honour to the old man's memory if I here record my conviction that Pfarrer Kneipp was absolutely honest and free from any taint of money-seeking.

He had, apparently, been weakly as a youth; and he evolved for himself a healthy system of life that must have been a great change for the better from that prevalent among the peasant class to which I believe he himself belonged.

Then he applied his system to the peasantry under his care.

The key-note to his system was open air, sunshine, application of cold water, and restoration of circulation

by natural means. The peasantry with whom he dealt were simply dressed, and could put on their clothes in a moment. Hence his principle—never to dry yourself with towels, but to hurry on the clothes and get dry by exercise—was easy of application. It is indeed the fact that you do dry in some ten minutes, and that the reaction seems better than that obtained by the use of rough towels. His peasantry had, further, to walk barefoot in dewy grass, or even in snow, and to take partial douches of all sorts. [It was characteristic of ‘the foreigner,’ as I have found it to be to-day, that he distrusted any wetting of the *head*.] In all ways he made them live more healthily, and he evolved also a system of herbal remedies to be used in special cases.

There is, no doubt, I believe, but that he had great success among his simple and dirty *clientèle*. When, however, his fame spread, and there flocked to him people from the cities whose ailments were due to deeper-seated diseases or to mental worry, and to whom baths and cleanliness were not a novelty, then I do not think his success was marked.

When I came to Wörishofen he was an old man, and had practised some thirty years. He took no money for himself, and none at all from poor people; only, if people could afford it, he would accept something for the ‘*Kloster*’ (a nunnery, I think) in which he was interested.

Wörishofen was a curious place; a sort of village that had extended itself in a crude kind of way in order to take in the patients. When I was there it was muddy and cold; rain and sleet fell. The cottage where you slept was in one place, the primitive baths in another, and eating-houses (all guiltless of table-linen) scattered here and there. The food was

very queer as diet for invalids—sausages, strong soup, beer, dumplings.

I had a bedroom and early coffee for five marks a week. I think I lay on linen, but had over me only a mountainous feather-bed—no sheet or blanket! I first went to the Kloster to see Pfarrer Kneipp. There he sat at a table, a strong-featured old peasant priest, honesty written on his face. Various doctors sat by him, taking notes. We patients stood by the wall, and were examined in turn.

A big, flushed, woman comes up. ‘How old are you?’

‘Oh! please, thirty-four!’ (with much panting).

‘Thirty-four? You’re much too fat for thirty-four. You must eat less, get up earlier, go out more, not sit so much by the stove drinking sweet hot coffee. And meanwhile go through a course of these bathings’—or words to that effect; and a bathing prescription was pencilled down on a scrap of paper.

I was given a course of knee douches, back douches, etc.; and spent a very uncomfortable two or three days thus. I could not ‘*rasch anziehen*’ (i.e. get my clothes on quickly), since I had the complicated dress of civilisation; the walks in slush were discouraging; there was a difficulty about boots; and the food was too un-English.

At last I had a private interview.

He said he was tired and old; he wanted people to go elsewhere; he recommended me to go to a *Kneipp’sche Wasseranstalt* at Jordanbad, near Biberach in Württemberg, kept by (I think) Franciscan Sisters. There, he said, all was comfortably arranged, and there was a proper resident doctor.

The old man would take nothing; but he said that if I were ever rich I could give something to the Kloster. At the time, I was ‘out of work’ owing to ill-health.

I believe that Pfarrer Kneipp had a natural turn for his work, a gift for diagnosis and suitable treatment; though his reasoning in explaining his treatment was odd at times. Thus, when explaining why he began gently and resorted to more heroic measures only when the patient was stronger, he said that you must first coax a fox out of its hole and only then bang your gun off at him!

But I 'hae my doots' about the doctors who 'learned' his method. The man at Jordanbad was a nice honest fellow and a properly trained man; but when it came to the douche question, he used to toss up for the sort of douche he should give me any particular day—or rather he used to ask what I should like to have—'*Was kriegen Sie heute, Herr Larden?*' I went to Jordanbad, and my time there, though in some ways clouded with the anxieties of the health seeker, was yet on the whole a gain to me; for I learned more of German life and ways of thought, and, in particular, I learned to know something of the home religion that is deeply rooted in the nature of even that type of noisier German tourist which too often jars on our English sensibilities. If you wish to know the attractive side of the commoner Germans, you should see them at Christmas time, and also read their literature—that of the more old-fashioned kind; and you will modify the views derived from encountering them on the Jungfrau railway.

In my journey, as in that to Wörishofen, I was in the midst of native life; quite out of the track of foreign tourists.

It was a quiet life there. Wading in water, knee douches,—Kneipp treatment of all kinds. Odd sort of food; conversations in which friendly, if rough, men helped me to learn German. The quiet sisters moved about, waiting on

us. Sometimes the nice young attendant came in about 5 A.M. and wrapped me in a wet sheet with a blanket over it ; then I had the most heavenly and restful sleep that I have ever experienced, and my mind lost all sense of disquiet.

Sometimes I walked with an ex-German student and we compared notes. He could not understand how we could get on at the Universities without duels : ‘ What if a student shoves you off the path ? ’ And at our public schools : ‘ Do you really mean that the son of a noble or of a state official (such as a postmaster) will associate with a mere clergyman’s son ? ’ I believe he was quite incredulous when I told him that a noble might be a schoolmaster, and that a curate might marry a noble’s daughter. [Of course any good family, certainly any county family, is ‘ noble ’ in the German sense.]

Naturally, in a country where doctors, clergymen, masters, even headmasters, and professors, are all poor men, the class of gentry is very limited ; in the long-run, the run of generation after generation, *income* determines the culture and refinement of life of a class, unless there be the strong traditional or hereditary pride of caste or descent to work against the slow effects of poverty.

Christmas day was a great event. There was a Christmas tree, and something of a representation of the birth of Christ. I remember but little. There does, however, linger in my memory a vision of the kind, sad, chief-sister nursing the Bambino (a large doll, in truth), and looking down at it with eyes pathetically maternal. And I remember how moved even the roughest men were as ‘ *Stille Nacht ! Heil’ge Nacht !* ’ was sung.’ One very rough fellow, a storekeeper from South Africa, had a choke in his voice as he spoke of having sung it as a child in Germany when his mother was alive.

Strange, as I sit here writing in Oxford, in 1909, to think of my having been there at Jordanbad for Christmas once, among those German patients, and gentle attendant sisters. Almost as difficult to realise as that I was, not long ago, seated by a camp-fire in the Andes, with Orion standing on his head in the northern sky before me !

On looking more closely into my diary I see that there *was* a sort of miracle play ; and there occur the words, a sort of stage direction : ‘ *Maria never moves, contemplates the child* (a doll).’ I must have been struck by her stillness and watched her chiefly ; that is why the rest has vanished from my mind.

Jordanbad did me no good, no more than Königstein in Taunus half a year before. And Switzerland began to call me again.

So on January 21, I set off for St. Moritz in the Engadine where Miss K. Gardner, whom I may venture to call a climbing friend of mine, had secured me a room at the Peterhof (I think it was called).

These journeys were interesting. I used to travel third-class and talk with the peasants there ; we rumbled slowly along in our *Bummel-zug*, and I slept at various towns on the way. But this particular journey, from Biberach to Chur, was of one day only.

As regards the journey on from Chur, how much one misses now that there are railroads and tunnels !

I do not think that any joy on earth could well be greater than that of one’s first sleigh drive over a pass in perfect weather, as one comes to Switzerland in the winter for the first time ; while yet youth is in one’s veins, and the vitality is stimulated, not overcome, by the embrace of the frozen and glittering air.

We started at 5.30 A.M. from Chur for the Julier pass

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in a diligence on runners. At first we were dragged over muddy roads, but very soon reached the snow. We had an early halt for hot milk; and later on (I think about midday) stopped for dinner at an inn.

On coming out we found that from this point we were to go in a number of small sleighs, each of one horse, there being room for two passengers (packed tight) in each, the driver standing on a board behind. The available track was very narrow; just two grooves for the narrow sleigh. And in many places the roadmakers had so built up the snow that, had the sleigh got out of this track, it would have gone right down off the road—even over a precipice on some routes.

The hardiness of the drivers was wonderful; even in bad weather they were but poorly clad. And the way they managed the sleighs was equally wonderful; there were often several freight sleighs for one man to manage.

It was glorious! I had never experienced anything approaching such air, such scenery, such exhilaration, in all my summers in Switzerland.

The descent to Silvaplana was exciting, as these small sleighs had no brakes.

I am convinced that a winter in Switzerland was far more healthy in those days than it is now. There was not any 'central heating' as yet; there were only stoves. And you warmed yourself *at* the stove, while the air was relatively fresh; some air had to pass through the stove, and so some ventilation was kept up.

In the bedrooms you either had no fire (I was in a freezing room with perfectly fresh air all the nights), or you had one only to dress by; and in the passages the air was fresh.

Now, you breathe in the hotels, in salon, *salle à manger*,



passages, and bedrooms alike, air that is not only hot but seems to 'smell of burning'; and only too often it is heavy with the odours of the kitchen.

Honestly, I should never, now, recommend a winter in Switzerland to any one who needed 'picking up,' unless he were strong enough to be out all day.

St. Moritz in 1890 did me good every hour, indoors or out of doors; but it needs a lot of out of doors now to out-balance the effect of the heated hotels.

That winter of 1890 must, I think, have been one of exceptional severity and clearness of sky.

Day after day the same tingling air, the touches of lace-like clouds that took on marvellous mother-of-pearl colours as they neared the sun, the fragments of 'the great halo' sketched in hues of burning purity, the serene green-blue of the evening skies. I used to write home: '*I never knew how beautiful Switzerland could be until I saw it in winter.*'

There was no ski-ing in those days. So, if I would gain the heights—and I must not speak of skating in these Recollections—I was obliged to go on foot. It was nearly February now, and the snow was very deep. In parts it was powdery and you waded; in parts it had a crust that bore you; in parts the crust let you through *even up to the armpits*.

I could get no companions, so had to go alone. One day I went up what was called, I believe, the 'Mont Rosatsch' (not the Piz R.). I learned a good deal about glissading down avalanche slopes, and braking. One must start from the top of the slope (so as to have no snow to come down behind one), and ride behind the avalanche produced. Never glissade down such a slope roped to another man!

Another day I went up the Piz Languard alone, and it was terribly heavy work! The treacherous crust let me

through to my armpits several times, while at other times I slipped on it; and again in other parts I had to force my way up through powdery snow. I took ten and a half hours over the expedition.

Another day I went up Piz Nair.

But perhaps my best day was up the Piz Surlej. I started at 6.45 A.M. As once before, I found the guardian's dogs at St. Moritz-Bad rather unfriendly and suspicious; they went as far as biting my ice axe, and seizing and shaking the seat of my knickerbockers.

I reached the summit at 12.30 (about five and three-quarter hours up). There was not a breath of wind, and I spent a perfect hour or more up there, the view being magnificent.

Nor had life been altogether lacking in this climb. On the way up I had sighted a chamois and had crouched at once. The animal, a fine buck, came up to within forty yards and stamped and whistled; then made off. I noticed how dark these animals are in winter; they acquire a coarse dark hair, I believe, which disguises their shorter reddish coat. I have since then seen both them and the ptarmigan pass through all the stages of change.

Four ptarmigan too, I saw, and three more chamois. I had some fine glissades on the way down, one perhaps of 1500 feet (?); but it was a heavy wade after that, and I reached home at 5 P.M. very tired.

On the 22nd (February) I saw a fine display of circles, mock suns, etc. I noted the whole down at the time, and also took measurements to enable me to determine angular distances afterwards; and then made a coloured sketch. Long afterwards I found in some French treatises that my angular distances were at any rate possible.

Still later, perhaps as late as 1902 or so, I came across

a picture of a similar phenomenon in, I think, the German *Illustrierte Welt*; but the various curves were there so complete that I suspect 'cooking.' For these halos depend on ice particles in the air of particular forms, and can only be complete if these be distributed all over the region concerned; and, as I believe, this is not likely to occur. I suspect that the illustrator finished off halos that were really incomplete.

I have never seen such a display since, though I have often seen a poorish sort of parhelia in England in spring when icy clouds were in the air.

I noted that no bad weather followed this display; there was a little mist and snow on the 28th, but it continued fine again later.

On March 29, I had one last good day, climbing the Piz Ot. This is quite an impressive-looking peak, rising 10,660 feet above the sea, and so giving a climb of about 5000 feet from Samaden. In winter and on foot it was quite a big ascent to make. I went with an acquaintance to Samaden, and started from there at 6.15 A.M., going by the map. The snow was not deep when the under crust bore; but when this broke we went in up to our waists.

On rounding a ridge we sighted the Piz Ot, and we could see indications of the edge of a path, cut on the shoulder; so we made for this.

When there we detected two black lines showing through the snow high up, and concluded that these were (as in truth they proved to be) handrails of a buried path, placed at awkward corners. There was of course a question of avalanche danger; a mountain where a path has to be cut, and where handrails are needed, is not to be trifled with in spring when sheeted with snow and ice.

The sun was, however, leaving the steep slope, and the buried pathway gave anchorage to the snow ; it seemed to me that it was just safe to go up, and would be safer to come down, as the sun would then have left the slope, and the air was cold. Still—I don't feel quite sure, now, that it *was* safe ; the more I see of winter snow, the more inclined I am to think that the only safe guide (apart from the obvious questions of newness of the snow and temperature of the wind) is ' *do avalanches fall here ?* '

Of snow in the summer you can judge from its surface, and on general principles ; but of winter snow you cannot so judge, and local knowledge is of more use than general snow wisdom.

However, we got to the top at 1 P.M., and had a glorious view. The Bernina, Oetzthal, and Ortler groups were well seen, and we believed that we made out Monte Rosa.

We had a bad return over the now completely demoralised snow down below, which had been in the sun all the time ; and I have never felt the sun as I did there, save once in June when an ascent of Mönch and Jungfrau in one day made us late on the snowfields of the Aletsch-firn.

Thus ended a long stay in Switzerland.

On March 31, I set off for a leisurely journey homeward, pausing here and there by the way.

I remember the Albula road, now dangerous to traverse ; a tunnel in 'one place pierced through a recently fallen avalanche ; Zürich, with its museum and the models of the old lake-dwellers' homes ; Basel, with its picture gallery and museum of antiquities. I saw the last of Switzerland as I sat by night on a terrace by the Rhine ; the lights of the city giving broken reflections in the water that swirled swiftly past ; the ferry, driven to and fro by the current, swinging on its cable guide. It was a scene that dwells in the memory.

*Note on complementary colours.*—I noticed the following case of complementary colours very often.

It is known, of course, that if you regard steadily a yellow object, and then look at a white ground, you see a blue or violet image of the object. But the involuntary restlessness of one's eyes makes a curious result follow.

If I regarded a lemon (I skated round one) on the brilliant snow-sprinkled ice, it appeared to be surrounded with a violet or bluish flame; and if the lemon was rolled, it appeared to leave a violet track. This is easily explained by the phenomenon of 'complementary colours,' coupled with the fact that the eyes cannot keep steadily fixed on one point in the lemon, but wander slightly, so that the complementary image is seen in part round the lemon or trailing behind it.

A similar explanation accounts for the still more curious appearances seen on a black and white chessboard, and for the white lines seen down the centre of the leads of a window through which one is looking against the sky.

I think I once read an account of a 'phosphorescent glow' seen, in broad daylight, round a man on the snow in the Lake mountains. I wondered, at the time, whether he wore a yellowish suit? If so, the appearance is easily accounted for; and, whatever the colour of the suit, I should expect sensitive eyes to see a margin round him brighter than the snow behind. For the complementary image that would be seen on the snow would be bright; and as the eyes, regarding the man, wander a little, a fringe of this image would be seen round him. But the snow must not be *too* bright.

## CHAPTER VII

In lonely glens, amid the roar of rivers,  
 When the dim nights were moonless, have I known  
 Joys which no tongue can tell.

*Percy Bysshe Shelley.*

EARLY SEASONS IN SWITZERLAND BEGIN—BINN AND  
 CHANRION, 1891—TIROL AGAIN—CORTINA AND THE  
 ORTLER GROUP, 1892

It was in the summer of 1891 that I next got out to Switzerland. I had settled down at the Royal Naval Engineering College at Keyham, and for about twelve years my vacation began early in June and ended some time before the end of July.

It will appear in the course of my record what a different Switzerland one sees at that early time. The high hotels are deserted, and perhaps even snowed up; the upper pastures may appear as snow fields, and the slopes of turf or stones as snow slopes; and such lakes as the Geisspfad, and the Daubensee (on the Gemmi), are mere levels of white. I had to learn where to go.

Of my uneventful visits to Gadmen, Stein, and Adelboden, and of the appearance of unreadiness which was everywhere presented, I will say nothing; only that I saw Adelboden as it was once and as it will never be again, an unspoilt and picturesque Swiss village with one old wooden inn. Alas, for the changes that 'winter sports' have brought with them!

I will pass on to my first introduction to Binn (4720 feet),



ERN AND THE OFFSHORE





a place that those who have once visited it return to again and again. Even after the Bernese Oberland, whose freshness and greenness so strike any one who is used to the poor dear old ruined and desolate Rhone valley, Binn in June was a revelation to me. The trees, magnificent firs and larches, the flowers and ferns, and, above all, the beautiful streams (not gletscher water, but of a clear and delicate green tinge <sup>1</sup>) formed a whole that was charming.

There was a very fine fall above Heilig Kreuz ; and above that, on the Ritter-alp, a still more wonderful slide of water of great length and bewildering energy. And the stream that descends from the Geisspfad See well repays a day's ramble along its banks.

Nor is snow lacking ; only, for Binn, July is better than August and September, since in the smaller snow groups there is apt to be much shrinkage of snow, and a prevalence of dirty ice, late in the season. The Ofenhorn crowns one valley, and the Hüllehorn shows above the trees up another. Glaciers are missing in the views round Binn ; but so are moraines. The grandeur of Saas Fee one has not at Binn, it is true ; but there is room in Switzerland for both, and one does not want to be soothed and stirred at the same time.

Binn itself was a quaint village. It was very black and very dirty, and the 'approach' to the hotel lay between manure heaps. But the whole was picturesque and of the old world ; and after all the hotel stood above the village. In the illustration the valley by which one has come up would be to the left, while that by which you go on to Heilig Kreuz and the Ritter pass would be to the right.

<sup>1</sup> I regret to say that, even at Binn, the two chief streams are more or less glacier streams later. For some eleven years I never saw Binn save early in the season ; hence the clearness of its streams, which indeed are never as turbid as those which one sees (*e.g.*) at Zermatt.

The hotel is seen somewhat raised above the village ; it was not so large as this in 1891. Heading the Binn valley is seen the Ofenhorn ; the Hohsand pass is at the end of the rock arête that runs down to the left from the mountain.

Of the attractions that I found at Binn I must not omit to mention two : the landlord Herr Schmid-Kraig, and the telephone, especially interesting in combination. The former was all one could desire as regards courtesy and good-will ; and in long walks over passes together I have since found him a most interesting companion, and the more one hears his views, the more one likes the man. But he was *not* strong at ascents ; I found he ‘ became a swindle ’ (*i.e.* got giddy) when we went up the Helsenhorn, while on a covered glacier he ‘ felt quite safe ’—without rope. But his sons took up the guiding later. Then the telephone ! Any wet day, we found, we could pass an hour full of amusement by sending a telegram (of any sort, to any one, anywhere) and by being present at its dispatch. The message went first to Ernen by telephone, to the Schmid home at Ernen. Naturally there came first much preliminary family talk in quaint dialect. Though the audible conversation was somewhat one-sided to the audience, one could guess much of the inaudible side. Thus Miss Gardner telegraphed to Saas Fee for Xaver Imseng ; telegram ‘ to follow ’ if he were away.

The message began with inquiries as to an interesting family event at a sister-in-law’s house in Fiesch. We were pleased and relieved to hear that all was well and that ‘ it was a boy.’ After a time the real message began. Xaver’s name took a quarter of an hour. It was pronounced in various tones, and spelt forwards (and backwards ?). ‘ *Faire suivre,*’ latter word two very distinct syllables, took twenty minutes. After a time—there was no hurry—we went to dinner ;

and the telegram was finished before we went to bed. At any rate '*Faire suivre*' reached its mark ; Xaver got the message.

This was my first visit to Binn ; the first of many. And this was the beginning of a very pleasant and also interesting friendship with a Swiss family. Pleasant, because I am welcomed there whenever I go, and am made to feel quite at home in this foreign land ; interesting, because I have seen the rise of the younger generation, with its new ideas and advanced education, while the older generation remains much as it was.

Going thus in June, I was usually practically the only one in the hotel, and so I saw much of the family.

One daughter, who waited on us, spoke English nearly perfectly ; and also spoke patois, proper German, French, and Italian. She played the violin and discussed music, volkslieder, and books, with great interest and intelligence ; and yet was not in the least degree above her work.

The sons appear to have taken places as waiters in the hotels of various countries in turn, in the winter, in order to learn the languages ; one, I noticed lately, serving under the *chef* in the kitchen so as to learn that business too.

I remember once coming up to Binn early in June and finding the father and two sons mending the path after the spring avalanches. The sons were in what I may call town clothes (very English), but had neat holland smocks thrown on instead of their coats ; they looked business-like, but much as do men of leisure who take gardening as a serious hobby. The father looked Swiss all over ; he has never changed.

As I chatted with them, there came slowly up the path a woman in peasant dress wearing a handkerchief over her head, and having the usual long basket, rucksack fashion,

on her back. It was the mother of these very English-looking and well-dressed young fellows ; a kindly, strong, and capable Swiss woman of the old school.

Whether one regrets the change or not, it is only fair to bear in mind that, in the mountains, the only way to 'get on' is—so far as I know—by hotel work ; and the new generation cannot be blamed if they take to it, and if they therefore travel, learn languages, and modernise themselves generally.

A poorer class become guides ; but even of them some in the end become hotel-keepers.

My friend Abraham Müller of Kandersteg has worked up to this level of prosperity. He was, however, a superior man, and forester of the district ; though for this post he received (if I remember aright) only eight pounds per annum. His brother had not pushed on, and was merely 'boots' at the Bear Hotel. Class distinctions, apart from the question of the power that prosperity gives, do not appear to exist in the mountain valleys of Switzerland. Of Swiss town society I know nothing.

I will pass over my climbs of that year at Binn, and will relate something of my further wanderings, which took me to Chanrion.

This is a club hut magnificently situated at a height of 8070 feet above the sea on high ground at the head of the Val de Bagnes, near the foot of the Otemma glacier, and opposite to the splendid *massif* of the Grand Combin.

My artist friend M. Lugardon was there, and had told me that I ought to visit it.

So, one fine day, immediately on descending from the Hüllehorn, I packed up and walked to Fiesch, took diligence to Brig, and got to Sion that night. It was indeed a

crowded day, and I actually fell asleep in a Swiss third-class carriage !

Next day found me starting from Châbles on foot, with a young fellow called Edouard Bruchez (long since a guide) to carry my sack.

Some time later he asked leave to stop behind for milk ; and I went on alone, and unluckily my map was in my sack. I had a curious time of it ! I had never been to Chanrion, and so I followed the only path that I could see. [There was, indeed, no visible track as yet to the hut, I found out later ; and of course I should hardly have been wise in leaving the path when I had no map.]

The result was that at 9.30 P.M. I found myself in a mist and among patches of snow. I was, indeed, near the top of the Col de Fenêtre.

I had strange wanderings that night ; far back on my tracks again to some cheese chalets, where the men could not help me, nor I understand their patois, and then back into the dark again. At last I saw a veritable lantern wavering downhill far off. I lit responsive matches ; the lantern stopped to look ; it had seen me.

At 2 A.M. (twelve and a half hours of wandering without food !) I was in the hut, and kind M. Lugardon was making hot cocoa there for me.

Next day I found that the situation of the hut was singularly fine. And I lived a few days of simple life there, sharing M. Lugardon's goat's milk, potatoes, cocoa, and bread, with sufficient content ; though I admit that I did long for better food and a bath. I had not as yet camped out in the Andes !

One day I set off up the Pic d'Otemma (11,135 feet). My late porter, the lad Edouard Bruchez, happened to be up at the hut again and asked leave to come with me. I

could see that he was somewhat surprised and amused to find himself following a 'touriste'; but none the less he noted the route for future use.

I met him once more, in his soldier dress, in the train; and again, more recently, as I was leading a party over Mont Collon; he was on the other side of the 'chasm' as we descended into it.

I had to leave the mountains for England on July 15, before most people think of coming out.

After an interval of seven years, I found myself, in 1892, bound once more for Tirol.

I will pass over a visit made alone to the Zillerthal; as, though very enjoyable, it was uneventful. The weather was bad, and climbing impossible—save for a small rock mountain or two. And I will begin at the point when I reached the 'Stella d'Oro' at Cortina, and there found my companion-to-be, Dr. Brushfield, and the guide Joseph Imboden.

I had only seen the latter once; but it did not take long to get to know and like him. He was a first-class guide of the 'all round' type (perhaps not a 'Grépon crack' man; I do not know), a natural gentleman, and a thinker. I found his conversation very interesting. Very characteristic of him was the change back from the leader and mountain companion to the self-respecting confidential servant, when, at the door of the hotel, and in the presence of other visitors, he asked for our instructions for next day; also the unobtrusive manner in which he noticed our English 'ways,' and adapted himself to them. In Tirol, in the smaller places, he ate and slept with us; and we were glad that this should be the case.

The scenery in this Dolomite region was to me quite

new, and very beautiful. A characteristic of these limestone masses are the ledges which at this time of the year broke the cliffs with horizontal bands of snow.

I was much struck with the prosperous and healthy look of the Cortina folk. After the haggard, dirty, and ungraceful women of the mountain valleys, worn out with unceasing weight-carrying and field labour, it was pleasant to see the women at the fountain here. One saw comely, even handsome faces, well-nourished and powerful frames, and the graceful Italian dress. They seemed, in fact, to combine the Teutonic frankness and friendliness of northern Tirol with the natural grace and taste in costume of Italy.

We did not intend any serious climbing—not the sort that demands ‘*Kletterschuhe*,’ the rope-soled climbing boots. Brushfield was on a photographing campaign, Imboden was no longer young, and I did not even know of these ‘fancy’ climbs; I was, as usual, content to go up any mountains—the higher the better, and with some snow work if possible.

We first went up Tofana; this proved a little dangerous on account of the presence of new, avalanche snow on the rock slopes.

Then Cristallo. This struck me as a magnificent mountain; there was something grand in its personality. Easy, however, it was; any party of *safe* men should be able to manage it guideless. The view from Cristallo is one of the finest in the Dolomites. The mighty rock crags, like castles and strongholds, of the Dolomites themselves strike the eye most; but, touching the imagination and lifting the heart of those who love more the eternal snows, are seen far off the glaciers of the Oetzthal, Glockner, and other glacier groups.

Pelmo was a curious surprise!

From the picture in Mr. Freshfield's *Italian Alps* I had expected to find it quite difficult.

You have to wind round the face of a cliff on a ledge ; and when you look across a hollow fold in the cliff, at a part of the ledge that you have just traversed or that you are going to traverse, it appears as though no human being could find foothold on it. Yet, save in three places, one can certainly walk the ledge without using hand or axe.<sup>1</sup> Nevertheless the traverse is very impressive. At places the cliff above actually overhangs (let no one scoff at this ; limestone is not as the usual rock of the more western Alps) ; and, if there be mist below, your situation, if you let your imagination 'take charge,' appears almost terrific. In reality it is, as said, all easy ; even one particular queer corner can be passed on the outside, and the usual stomach-crawl is quite unnecessary. From the top (to quote Mr. Packe) the crags of Antelao and Tofana are striking objects ; and it is interesting to see Cortina, twenty kilometres (or twelve and a half miles) distant, as a little white town nestling at the foot of the mountains.

On July 3, we managed to get from Cortina to Kals, and put up at the most pleasant and friendly little inn kept by Herr Bergerweiss. We were bound for the Great Glockner, a striking mountain that rises 12,460 feet above the sea.

Next day we went up to the hut high up to the Adlersruhe, lunching at the Stüdl Hütte on the way. Both huts are really small inns, inexpensive and quite comfortable enough. There were two Germans, an Austrian, and several guides there. Some of them had the barekneed Tirolese costume ;

<sup>1</sup> I do not know whether beginners realise how very important it is to practise, where no danger will ensue, walking without using axe or hands. Only thus can a good balance be attained. Many are almost helpless without a 'third leg'—a parlous condition to be in !



and when I asked one how he managed on real rock climbs, and if it would not be better to have garments that protected his knees, I was amused to find that he only thought of the wear and tear to his garments ;—of his own skin he did not appear to think !

On July 6, we went up the Glockner. Really the D.u.Ö.A.V. (German and Austrian Alpine Club) are *too* careful for their members ! Not only do they plant an inn some one and a half hours from the top, as well as one half way up, but they also have erected a handrail (of galvanised wire) along the final ridge.

Nevertheless, one of the guides appeared to find room for danger ; for he walked practically on the cornice. I exclaimed to Imboden that he should be warned ; but Imboden only remarked, in a tone of great contempt (with which, I think, the said guide's picturesque but unpractical costume had something to do) : 'These guides *prefer* a cornice !'

We set off from the top soon after 6 A.M., and got to Lienz at 5.30 P.M.

We slept a night at Meran ; and July 8th found us at the Hôtel Eller, St. Gertrud, where I had been seven years before. I think there was now a carriage road up to the place, and a second hotel there either ready or being built.

On the 9th we reached the summit of the Ortler, in about five and a quarter hours direct from the hotel ; there is no need to use the Payer Hütte.

Cevedale followed ; and then Brushfield and Imboden left.

Several times this summer I had had a very painful experience in the way of sickness and other distressing symptoms ; and perhaps I can give some useful advice

to the inexperienced. If you have bad symptoms after the evening meal when you have been climbing, take it as a sign that your stomach is exhausted without your feeling exhausted yourself ; and (i) *rest* before the evening meal, (ii) eat little or nothing at it, and make up for it next day after a night's sleep.

I now got very bad after a hurried rush up and down the Vertainspitze, and failed to 'walk off' the pain up the Schöntaufspitze next day. Nevertheless, though in great pain and rather weak, I was bent on getting up the Ortler by the Hintergrat before I left for England.

A young guide called Zischg whom I engaged was not very keen about it ; he only knew of me as a 'sick tourist,' and there was much new snow on the mountain.

However, we started from the hotel at 2.40 A.M. I had substituted my eighty feet club rope for his short and bad one.

We passed the new hut at 4.15, and soon turned up snow slopes where each step had to be kicked ; and after a short time I took my turn. [By the way, I wonder why it is that, in the matter of going up in deep snow, or in kicking steps, a fairly trained amateur is so often on quite equal terms with a guide ; while, perhaps inevitably, for cutting steps or for carrying weights the guide is, as a rule, indefinitely stronger ? I have found this to be the case, and believe that others have.]

After a lot of this work, and a scramble up rocks, we halted on the ridge for a quarter of an hour, and ate a mouthful ; and then we roped and went up the ridge on snow.

But soon we had to make a traverse to the left over steep and loose snow, and several prolonged roars from the slopes towards the Königsspitze had already emphasised our

doubts as to the safety of such traverses ; ' things ' were decidedly avalanchy. At this point I took upon myself to form a plan of the campaign, leaving it to the guide to object if he liked. So I suggested a system of anchoring round rocks, only one at a time being loose, keeping moreover as near the top of each snow slope as we could so as to have as little snow as possible above us. We got across all right ; and, climbing some rocks, regained the ridge.

As a rule, difficulties in this route are avoided by traverses, so Zischg told me ; but we both felt that from this point we must tempt no more avalanches, but keep to the ridge itself. I went first (since the guide could hold me better than I him), and after some trouble with cornice we got the true ridge of old snow between our feet. Then came some rocks, avoided usually by traversing ; he held my feet as I got up these, and I in turn helped him—he carried more—with the rope. Then came the last, and very sharp, snow arête, up which we went astraddle. The new snow that I cleared away with my axe started slides of snow that became avalanches lower down, and we knew that we had been right in following the ridge. This sharp arête led us to a few steps below the final summit, and we reached this at 9.30 A.M., having had only a quarter of an hour's rest from really heavy work since 2.40 A.M.

We were well rewarded. It was a glorious day ; no wind, and a fine sun. A grand view of mountains and clouds—far more impressive than the panoramic view of the absolutely clear day.

Below us ran our dotted steps along the sharp and somewhat steep arête until they ended at a rocky point ; further down they began again, and we saw them still further in the direction of the minute hut, just visible. It certainly looked a queer route ; and, under the bad conditions of

snow that prevailed then, I certainly think I had a right to feel a quiet satisfaction in this last day's scrambling in Tirol.

But the guide's joy was too comic ! He could not eat for joy, he said. He would sooner have given me ten gulden and received no pay than have missed such a day ! No one had ever followed the Grat itself before ! It ought to have required *three* guides ! He had never before climbed with a Herr who could break steps, use an axe, etc.

In fact the young fellow was extraordinarily excited. So he talked, exulted, and drank (fortunately weak) wine, while I slowly absorbed much-needed food, smoked, and basked in the glorious sun in that glorious place. Truly an ideal last look at the mountains for the season !

A little before this I came across Peter Dangel once more, and in a very pleasant way. I had run short of money, relying on the use of a cheque at the end. But the headwaitress (who was the responsible person) did not understand cheques. Then came Peter Dangel over the mountains. He had seen me at Saas Fee among all the English climbing lot, and would know how we stood there. So I asked him if he would just tell the waitress that I belonged to the English who were trusted in Switzerland. He at once offered to lend me one hundred gulden ! I did not accept the offer at the time ; and later on his Herr, I think Mr. Runge (A.C.), came up and offered to change me a cheque. But it was very nice of Peter Dangel.

On the way back, when I got to Landeck, the station-master and others told me it was of no use going on, as there had been a great mud-avalanche that had destroyed the line, and I should get stuck at Landen (some one and a half hours further on). But some Austrian climbers, with whom I had made acquaintance in the omnibus,

advised me to come on with them, and said they would help me to find a man to carry my gladstone past the avalanche. At Landen they did get a porter for me.

There had not been any landslip ; but a huge mass of mud and rocks had poured out of a side ravine and had overwhelmed railway and road. We took one and three-quarter hours on foot passing it ! Trains on the other side were irregular and slow ; but at last I got to Sargans and put up at a queer 'Hôtel Thoma.' One was out of the world there ! My bed was one franc ; wine, 0.40 cents ; the station-man was to call us by blowing a horn outside the windows ; and breakfast was only to be got at the station. Luckily the horn did wake me, though it came early ; the train set off at 5.5 A.M., and I reached Basel at 1 P.M.

I slept there and visited the two museums again ; and found the Restaurant-Café National, over the river, very pleasant on a warm evening.

And so to England and to the routine of work once more.

## CHAPTER VIII

These peaks are nearer heaven than earth below.

'Tis the blue floor of heaven that they upbear ;  
 And, like some old and wildly rugged stair,  
 They lift us to the land where all is fair,  
 The land of which I dream.

*Bonar.*

BINN, ZERMATT, 1893—BERNER-OBERLAND, 1894

ON June 12, 1893, I found myself, the only visitor as yet I think, at Binn ; and on the 15th, Mr. Coolidge arrived with Christian Almer (son). Lately, in 1906, I met a third generation of Almer as guide ; but in 1893 one still called Mr. Coolidge's guide ' young Christian Almer.'

On the 17th, Christian and I (Mr. Coolidge being unwell that one day) went up the Pizzo Fizzo. It is not a big climb—none of the Binn climbs are—but it is interesting. It is a strange, flat-topped and steep-sided mountain that looks down on the Devero valley. I have since been up it twice guideless, and once quite alone ; and I always like it. It is curious to climb a real mountain and then to find a large rock plateau at the top ; and the somewhat lower rocky *Vorsprung*, a sort of peak split off, seen threatening and unapproachable when you look over the southern precipice, is very striking. There is another, but still more remarkable, split-off outlier to be seen when you look over the cliff on the Italian side of the Ritter pass.

I pass over other climbs ; and will only mention an incident that struck me as Mr. Coolidge and Christian Almer

and I were ascending Cherbadung from the Italian side, from Devero. There was one awkward iced chimney on the way up, and Christian's Teutonic phlegm contrasted strongly with the excited, desperate, tiger-cat kind of way in which I saw later an Italian guide, of more nervous and excitable temperament, attack difficulties—'*je ne puis descendre, je ne puis avancer,*' and then a desperate clutching scramble with hissing breath, most alarming! For when I inquired of Christian how things went, when he was wedging his way up this iced chimney, he replied quite calmly: '*etwas schwierig, man muss arbeiten.*' With him it was just well-directed hard work, not a desperate teeth-and-claw scramble.

That evening we had a quaint sort of dance in the wirthschaft on the basement. One of the daughters danced with her *fiancé*, who played the music in a very gusty way on a 'mouth-organ' as he revolved; another danced with me; Christian Almer had led out a servant girl; and Mr. Coolidge, as chaperon, sat against the wall and enjoyed the scene.

After some more climbing, my time with Mr. Coolidge and Christian Almer was over; and I left Binn.

I had engaged a guide, Franz Anthamatten; and I met him at Zermatt on June 28. He was 'elderly' for a guide, being forty-four; but was very experienced in routes, a good climber, and very reliable in danger. Physically he was not very strong, and one had to take care not to overload him. We put up at the Riffelhaus, an hotel about 8400 feet above the sea, magnificently situated opposite the Matterhorn. I have always admired the giants of the Alps, be they easy to climb or difficult. So, after a climb on the Riffelhorn, and an ascent of the Breithorn (13,685 feet), we set out one day at 1.50 A.M. from the Riffel hotel to attack the highest summit of Monte Rosa—a summit that

stands 15,217 feet above sea-level (see p. 160). It was a very long day. First we had to descend to the Gorner glacier and cross it to the Untere Plattje where the Bétemps hut stands, at a height of about 9200 feet above the sea. From there we mounted the Monte Rosa glacier until steep slopes led us to the saddle, from which lofty halting place, of some 14,000 feet above sea-level, we looked down to the Grenz glacier that lay far below us. A steep ascent from this led us to the final sharp ridge that would take us to the top. There was a lot of snow, and some *cornice* on this ; and I advised the lengthening of the rope between us, that it might be easier for one man to be on good holding ground while the other was exploring the arête. Franz agreed ; but, in re-arranging matters, he let fall on to the Grenz glacier his sack with all our provisions ! So there we were, at about 9 A.M., foodless for the rest of the day !

Further on we came to a ' false ' snow arête whose appearance I did not like. It was not corniced ; but there was a ridge of newer snow supported on its side only by adhesion to much older stuff. I expressed my distrust of it ; but Franz considered it right and walked along it. With me, however, it gave way and went down to the Grenz glacier below ; only I threw myself over on the other side and held on. I doubt whether he could have held me had I gone with it ; I think both of us would have followed the sack and come to grief. I ventured to lecture him, and the final result was increase of care on his part, and also, without any decrease in friendliness, the establishment of the principle that we were to consult together in future—a much more satisfactory state of affairs.

We did not reach the top until 11.45, about ten hours from the hotel. Here we were 15,217 feet above the sea.



It is a fine mountain, and I much enjoyed the stay of half an hour on the top. The descent went easily, and we reached the Riffelhaus at 5.45 P.M.

After this nine hours' fast, much exertion, and great heat, I took the precaution to eat practically nothing until next day, and so did not feel any the worse. But two days running were a drain on one's strength; we had been up the Breithorn the day before.

My next interesting climb was an attempt, practically successful, on the Ober-Gabelhorn (13,364 feet). This is a fine double-headed peak whose aspect, as viewed from the Trift inn, is very impressive. Of the route up it I shall say more another time; here I will only recount the main feature of this ascent. On July 7, we set out from the Monte Rosa hotel at 1.30 A.M., having taken on a second guide. [The illustration opposite p. 32 shows another side of this mountain, and the double summit with the 'Gabel' between is not seen.]

At 11.25 A.M. we had successfully reached the first, and slightly lower, of the two summits of the 'Gabel.' From here to the second and higher summit it was, in August, so Franz told me, an easy passage of some ten minutes; and years later I found he was right.

But then, early in July, the little fork was filled with the unstable remnants of a winter cornice, and the approach to it on our side was masked with much bad snow. There was nothing one could trust to, and too much to clear away.

So we lunched and considered matters. After lunch the two men tried to prepare a way across, but soon gave it up. We were virtually at the top, since our summit was, I believe, only a few feet lower than the other, and we had had the climb, and the view was fine. Yet how very disappointing it was not to reach the real, the very, top!

I saw that my regret was quite inconsistent with my principles ; yet none the less I felt it.

We had to give it up and descend. Reaching the Trift inn at 7.45 P.M., we found there a party (Mrs. Farrar was one, and a Gentinetta was one of the guides) who intended to climb the mountain next day. But my guides discouraged theirs, and we all started down together by lantern-light at 9.15 P.M., reaching the Monte Rosa hotel at 10.15 P.M.

My first ascent of the Matterhorn (14,705 feet) might well have proved my last on any mountain had it not been for two factors, viz., the absence of any intense cold, and the moral courage and carefulness of Franz Anthamatten. In the illustration, an arête is seen in the middle, with a steep face on either side of it. We mounted this until about on a level with the top of the glacier on the left ; traversed this glacier for a short way, and then struck up the face. Steep though it looks, this face took us up easily for a long way. We then made back towards the arête, and gained the 'shoulder' seen in it—apparently near the top of the mountain. Turning along this to the left, an ascent was made for some way with the help of the fixed ropes and chains. The final piece, a sloping face to the right of what appears to be the summit, is called the 'roof' ; and this affords an easy scramble up to the top when the rocks are exposed and not glazed. When we went the 'roof' was an ice slope.

We left the Schwarzsee hotel at 12.55 A.M. on July 10. I distrusted the weather ; there was mist and cloud and queer currents of air. But Franz, with (as he admitted later) a strong bias in his judgment, 'thought' that the Föhn and the north wind were fighting, and that the latter would get the victory and bring a clear day with it. For my part, I should not have started ; it was more threatening



THE MALLERHOEN FROM THE RUFFEL ALP. — A FROSTY MORNING.

Photo by H. W. W. W. W.



than on the night preceding poor Boreckhardt's ascent that ended in his death.

We halted but little, and had to cut steps across the first couloir, and in one or two other places, and on the shoulder.

At 9.50 A.M. we were only at the bottom of the ropes, and there halted for food.

Meanwhile clouds had collected about the Dent Blanche and elsewhere, our summit was shrouded, and fine snow fell; thunder began to be heard in low mutterings. Of course we ought to have turned back.

The 'roof,' above the ropes, was, as I have said already, in a bad state; it was an ice slope covered with bad snow. The guides, following the good 'custom'—custom of August and with the rocks bare of snow—had left two of the three axes below. Steps had to be cut all the way up.

At twelve o'clock we were on the summit, after eleven hours' ascent with but little halt.

I do not think I ever felt more discouraged in my life! We were in mist on a ridge of soft snow, and gloomy vacaney, horribly suggestive, lay on every side. Thunder now rolled loudly, and we began to bristle and hiss with electricity; while snow fell steadily and silted up the steps of that awful ice staircase that I had to descend axeless, cramponless! The last man would keep the axe; so the first man could not improve the steps.

My inborn dread of the mountains came back strongly; and I certainly did not expect to get down in safety. It is really a great strain when one feels pretty sure that the slip will come sooner or later. Franz descended last, as chief guide. It was not encouraging when the first man, who like myself had no axe, asked to be let down the full eighty feet of the rope while I, untied, stood in a step to

one side. I don't think that there could well be a more 'lonesome' position than mine; untied, on a slope of ice that ended in mist through which black spaces indicated awful depths; and not even the comfort of an axe as a support; getting a twitch, too, whenever it lightened. We took one hour getting down the roof, and one hour down the ropes and chains.

The whole mountain being now covered with snow that hid all the holds and balled under the boots, great care was required. As I had hoped, I kept my head in spite of my 'funk,' and insisted on making all as safe as we could; and Franz backed me up and checked our leader, whose cry was: 'We must hurry down at any risk.' For my part, I always choose the risk of being benighted, and other remoter risks, rather than the nearer and more immediate risks due to careless going; I prefer to take short views in cases like this.

We reached the upper hut at 5.50 P.M.

I may here say that on the way up Franz had pointed out to me all the places where men had died. 'Here fell Herr ——'; 'here was found Herr Borckhardt's body'; 'here occurred the accident of the first ascent.' These mental landmarks haunted my memory dismally in this weird and dangerous descent of ours.

All the time the electrical phenomena became more and more striking; thunder followed flash at once, and we prickled, bristled, and hissed with electricity to such a degree that our poor second guide (*not* Franz) was terribly alarmed! He carried a big snowball on the head of his axe to make it less dangerous! On at least three occasions I heard *with* the flash a curious splashing crack, a very queer noise; the thunder followed, one would say 'immediately,' but this queer sound came first. I judged at the

time that it was either due to a slight stir in the loose snow and stones when the electrical tension was relieved, or else was the sound of slighter discharges that (by setting free 'ions') prepare the path for the main discharge, and immediately precede it. Such tentative, preparatory discharges may be seen when an electrical machine is working; and of course the slight sound of these would just precede the loud sound of the main discharge.

The last couloir was deep in new snow, and there was much danger of avalanche; but we crossed it safely, and reached the lower hut (and our lantern) at 8.45 P.M. or so. A moment later, as it seemed, it was too dark to see anything! We were only just in time, as my men had no lantern with them on the mountain.

We had to rope for the further descent, and take great care. We met a guide and a Hausknecht—a grand rescue party!—coming to look for us.

On the way down, in the dark, brush discharge was seen from axes, fingers—even from moustaches; and everywhere the bluish fire spluttered from the rocks. It was interesting to divert such a brush from the rock on to the axe; indeed, after we had safely reached the hut, and all danger was over, I quite enjoyed the electrical display. Before the hut, I had made observations conscientiously rather than with pleasure; but I made them!

We reached the Schwarzsee inn about 10.45 P.M.; and the cold, not excessive, had kept us all very fresh in spite of the (nearly) eleven hours of continuous descent. Since I went as fast as Franz Anthamatten wished to go, the time taken to get down indicates the difficulty of the descent under such conditions.

There had been great anxiety about us. At 4.30 P.M., they told me, it had been too dark to read inside the hotel;

on July 10! And the mountain looked worse than when Boreckhardt was lost.

As Franz Anthamatten said: '*Das Matterhorn bleibt immer das Matterhorn.*' It may seem easy on a fine day, but it can change into a terrible man-trap if the weather go wrong.

Next day we were quite fresh and not at all weak after our long day. As we descended to Zermatt, various strangers greeted and congratulated me; all Zermatt, it seemed, had been anxious—even the visitors.

To any one who needs the advice I would say, take good care that your guides (if you have any) have no reason for risking a serious ascent in doubtful weather! Mine *had* a bias in favour of it.

To a request that I should lecture on my experiences I turned a deaf ear. I was thankful to be safe down again, and very grateful to Franz Anthamatten for the care, steadiness, and cheerful courage, that had made him such an invaluable last man. One could not make a lecture out of that; a short thanksgiving service would have been more appropriate. Ours was, I believe, the fourth ascent of the year. Young Andreas Seiler had made the first; and it was rather later that the poor young fellow got killed on the way to the hut in what would have been the first ascent of the year on the Italian side. He was only nineteen years old.

On July 13, we went over the fine Mischabeljoch (12,651 feet) to Saas Fee; and the opinion that I had formed in 1886, that it was easier in the opposite direction, was confirmed. Even thus early in the season we had a rather awkward descent to and past the bergschrund on the Saas Fee side.

With this ended my season for 1893.



On June 16, 1894, I reached Lausanne in the morning and posted my gladstone to Kandersteg, intending to take my own somewhat unconventional way thither on foot. In the afternoon I went on to Salquenen; and, having fortunately understood patois directions as to short cuts, I got up to Leukerbad in two and three-quarter hours. This was far better than taking the train as far as Leuk.

Next morning I set off at 7.35 A.M. over the Gemmi; and certainly it was a very different Gemmi from that which I had passed in the August of 1880! The upper part of the path was covered with hard snow that filled the gully, and I had to cut steps.

Above, it was a white world! All was snow; the Daubensee a white sheet. I do not think that I got clear of the snow until I had nearly crossed the Spitalmatte.

I put up at the Bear Hotel, where I had agreed to meet Mr. Coolidge on June 20, and established friendly relations (which still endure) with the landlord and his wife, members of the Egger family. The father was at the Bear when I had last seen it, in 1880.

Some wanderings got me into training by the time that Mr. Coolidge and 'young' Christian Almer came.

On June 23, Mr. Coolidge and I and Christian went to inspect the Tschingellochtighorn. It is a queer freak of nature! Seen from the Ueschinenthal it appears unclimbable; but, as is so often the case, it has to be climbed 'from the other side.' Winding round the base and sloping up on the Engstligen side the climbers, who have so far only walked up (though on rather nasty and steep ledges of limestone), reappear to spectators watching on the Ueschinenthal side, high up at a notch near the top of the little mountain. Then comes a bit of climbing. It is really rather nervous work until you have learned or dis-

covered the best way of doing it ; for now you are on very slippery limestone, more adapted to *Kletterschuhe* than to nailed boots, and you hang over the big cliff that had made the mountain look so inaccessible. This bit is very short, and there follows only a queer little chimney for which you must discard a knapsack. The actual climbing barely lasts a quarter of an hour.

I have since done it three times without a rope (on one of these occasions when quite alone) ; the last time, when I had passed the critical age of fifty by some two years, and when there was some lodged snow and ice, it really did seem once more rather nasty. I don't think I shall do it again alone !

On Monday, June 25, we three went to sleep in the *old Blümlis-alp* hut. Oh ! the deadly chilliness of that old stone hovel ! There was a flooring of ice ; so the discomfort can be imagined.

The next day we climbed the *Weisse Frau* (12,010 feet). That is just one of those mountains that may be very easy thus early in the season, and very disagreeable in August ; good snow early, all ice later. But when we went there was hard snow ; so, as we had not *steigeisen*, steps had to be cut all the way. Abraham Müller (I think the father) came with us as local guide, and did the cutting ; I then first made his acquaintance, and for many years now we have been friends.

We had intended to traverse the *arête* to the *Blümlisalp-horn*, but we found it very sharp or even corniced, and so gave up the plan.

It is a beautiful region up here ; but the ease and pleasure of climbing the *Blümlisalp-horn*, and more especially the *Morgenhorn* and *Weisse Frau*, depends entirely on the question of whether one can kick or make steps readily in

good snow, or whether there be hard ice. Steps or no steps, I certainly recommend crampons as part of the outfit.

Of the view from the Blümlis-alp summits, Leslie Stevens writes : ' We enjoyed a view much like that from the Altels. The great charm is that, standing as these mountains do on the north edge of the high mountain district, there is a beautiful contrast between the comparative plain involved in the northern semi-circular sweep of the horizon, and the wild confusion of peaks to the southward.'

Much the same applies to the Balmhorn (12,175 feet) which we did on June 28, from the Schwarzenbach inn. But as the slopes are gentler, I should say (if I remember aright) that even ice slopes there could be ascended without steps being cut if the climbers wore crampons of any sort.

On July 1, Rudolf Almer came ; and, on July 2, we set off for the Lötschen pass. We climbed the Grosse Hockenhorn and descended to Ried, after an easy day free from the constraint of the rope.

What a homely little inn it was ! There are few such now to be found. We had real honey, and honest Valais wine ; and I chatted with the curé (or rather the kaplan, to be more exact). But there *was* too much manure about !

Next day we made a leisurely ascent of the Beich pass (10,235 feet), starting at 6 A.M. and reaching the top at 1.15 ; very slow time. You go up without a rope, and the descent to the Oberaletsch Hütte or to the Bel-alp is singularly easy. I do not think that there can be many passes of such grandeur that can be made with such great ease. I recommend it strongly to guideless wanderers of snow experience.

We reached the hut about 5 P.M.

On the day following we 'traversed' the Aletschhorn

(13,720 feet), in the sense that our routes up and down only joined on the glacier below. It is a grand mountain !

On my Siegfried map I have marked the up-route as passing the points 3252 and 3467, leaving the latter on the right, reaching the snow col to which this northerly course leads, and then turning abruptly to somewhat south of east along the arête. The down-route is marked as along a rock arête that descends in a south-south-westerly direction, 3966 being left on the left hand ; and after 3404 was passed the up-route was soon joined. I remember that, in one place, we encountered one of those problems that frequently occur on the high mountains early in the season ; and this was early.

On the arête high up we came across an enormous mass of snow, of the nature of a cornice but very solid, which looked pretty sure to break away before the summer was over ; and we could not pass it without, to some extent, throwing our weights on to it. Was it safe ? Christian Almer said it was ; and certainly it did not break, or I should not now be writing. Since then I have been nearly carried down by a big fall of some hundred feet of cornice under somewhat similar conditions ; and I do not feel so sure that we did not run considerable risk. Nevertheless, one could trust a guide of Christian's stamp.

Of the view from the top of this magnificent peak, A. W. Moore remarks that there is no point of view better for a general survey of all the Pennine chain ; for it is nearly opposite the centre of this, and is not too far off. From Mont Blanc to Monte Leone, peak after peak can be recognised. Of the nearer mountains the Bietschhorn is one of the most striking objects, rising abruptly in the singular manner—suggesting inaccessibility—which to my mind it shares with the Dent Blanche.

I think that in this Oberaletsch Hütte I first came across the modern wooden hut ; and how warm and comfortable it seemed after that deadly chill stone hovel, the old Blümlis-alp Hütte !

On July 6, we went to the Bel-alp.

I know how devoted some are to this place ; but, as I have said elsewhere, I like an hotel to be more in the heart of the mountains.

I can thoroughly recommend the rocky arête of the Fusshörner to climbers staying at the Bel-alp ; they are the Charmoz and Grépon of these parts.

On July 10, I found myself alone ; and I hired at the Eggishorn a guide of a very common sort, and a porter who I think was properly a building labourer, and went off to the Concordia, bound for the Jungfrau and the Finsteraarhorn.

We ascended the Aletsch glacier ; and as we neared the hut which is built on the rocks at the base of the Kamm, at a height of 9400 feet above the sea, I saw a turbaned head up above, and guessed at once that I had struck Sir Martin Conway doing 'the Alps from end to end.' And so it was. There I found him, and two little Gurkhas, a Carrel who had been to the Andes, and another Italian guide ; and also Mr. Fitzgerald.

Such little men the Gurkhas were ; with boyish faces and legs very thin. Yet I think that Sir Martin told me that they had asked for more to carry, and that consequently their climbing loads were nearer sixty pounds than the regulation twenty pounds of the guide. [I speak here of the loads carried by guides on active service as such, not of porters' loads.]

The Jungfrau—but I will not attempt to describe it ! Suffice it to say that one mounts the great glacier in

the midst of magnificent scenery, climbs up steep snow slopes that can be dangerous for avalanches when the snow is bad, gains the Roththal saddle, whence one looks down on the Roththal on the other side of the Jungfrau-Gletscherhorn ridge, ascends some steep snow which is usually ice (this is good mountain English), and so reaches the top. The view is grand ! All the giants of the Berner-Oberland are about you, and across the Rhone valley the familiar peaks of the Valais mountains claim recognition. Far below lies the terrace on which Mürren is perched (I had not seen it since 1880) ; Mürren itself, if I remember aright, just hidden by the beautiful Silberhorn, a subordinate summit of our mountain. In descending again to the Roththal saddle, I was much impressed with the responsibility which quite ordinary guides take upon themselves in conducting travellers of quite unknown capabilities up the Jungfrau. We descended in ice steps where a slip would have been fatal ; and yet—I speak of the many years during which crampons were unused—there would have been but small chance of the guide holding a man. On the Jungfrau summit, as on at least three other mountain tops, we enjoyed perfect stillness and warmth, while on the arête below a cold wind chilled us to the bone.

The expedition took us but eight hours ; and so I had nearly the whole day before me in which to repose before our morrow's climb up the Finsteraarhorn. And a more delightful lounging place than the Concordia-platz could not well be found !

More than one of the Berner-Oberland peaks are extraordinarily impressive. There come to my mind the great Wetterhörner towering over the Grindelwald valley, a tremendous fall from the summit to the depths ; the Bietschhorn, which rivals the Matterhorn and the Dent

Blanche in the impression that it gives of isolation and inaccessibility ; and the massive grandeur of the Aletschhorn. But I do not think that any of these can eclipse the mighty Finsteraarhorn. It combines massiveness with the characteristics of a real 'peak' whose summit seems to lift itself, aspiring to the sky ; and with its 14,000 feet—it yields not even to the Aletschhorn in height—it dominates the main Bernese group. To reach it from the Concordia hut you must first cross the pass, north of the Kamm, called the Grünhornlücke ; and from this point, looking across the Fiescher glacier (*'Walliser-Fiescher-Firn'*) you get a grasp of the whole mountain. This complete view of the mountain that you are attacking is but rarely obtained, since, as a rule, you approach it from its base so that it is foreshortened.

Of our climb there is little to say ; only that it was a grand ascent, though surprisingly easy.

With this ended my summer.

## CHAPTER IX

Innumerable streams, above, below,  
 Some seen, some heard alone, come rushing ;  
 Some with smooth and sheer descent,  
 Some dashed to foam and whiteness, but all blent  
 Into one mighty music.

*Richard Chenevix Trench.*

BINN—DEVERO—TOSA—CHAMONIX, 1895

ON Sunday, June 16, 1895, a curious chain of accidents as regards the missing and catching of trains caused me to meet and travel with another early climber, and to make his acquaintance. He had with him an Italian guide ; and, as it was then too early to do serious work, and as none of the risks that may be run when you rashly join forces with men whose powers you do not know would be involved if only moderate expeditions were attempted, we agreed to share his guide and see how we could while away our time at Binn. My then acquaintance was Mr. Corry ; and later I had with him some of the best climbing that I have ever had. Especially do I owe to him a strong impulse towards guideless climbing about which I had hitherto had a perhaps excessive diffidence.

Of our climbs at Binn I shall say little or nothing ; but I shall use this occasion to speak of Devero, and its beautiful valley, and of that delightful Binn-Devero-Tosa-Binn round that I have so often made with companions or entirely alone.

June 21st found us walking over the Krieg-alp pass to Devero ; and for the second time—but not the last—I passed a night at the quaint little inn.



Alas, that its day is past ! There is a new inn, up to date ; it has a salon, table d'hôte, a chef, even a bathroom. But I regret, I miss, the little old inn.

I admit that it *might* have been dirty ; but it wasn't. There might have been fl—s, but there weren't. The pigs which rambled about outside might have inconvenienced us, but they didn't ; kitchen and guest-room were on the first floor, and the stairs baffled these animals so inquisitive, so lacking in the courtesy of unobtrusiveness ; just a step from the yard and we soared above them and became inaccessible. The bedrooms were even higher, and quite clean.

Up the stairs one found a sort of stone landing, that *was* the kitchen ; so it seems to my memory now. A huge Devonshire fireplace, a great caldron hanging over the wood fire, a picturesque old woman tending the crock and the fire, some withered old crony sitting opposite ; a curé, a peasant or two ; our shabby old landlord, always wearing his older hat—the richest man in the valley they said ; things hanging up to dry or smoke ; bunches of herbs ;—such is my remembrance of the kitchen of the little old inn. And compare this with the kitchen of the new hotel, just like that of any Swiss hotel ; a square room with a sort of iron altar in it from which horrible gravy smells (visible to the eye as smoke) ascend ; a man-cook in a dirty linen cap hired for six weeks only ;—the whole thing obviously got up for the season, no touch of the country about it. And then the meals at our little old inn, in the primitive old guest-room. We mention coffee ; merely an allusion to it, as something pleasant ; something perhaps even suitable when one has come over a pass. A little later our host (in his hat) wanders timidly in and puts down a cup—it may be two or even three cups ; spoons, saucers,

and a plate or so follow. Then sugar, in the queer little bits to be found in poor over-taxed Italy. Bread, old but good; and finger biscuits like lighting spills. And finally the coffee, real, fragrant coffee, and hot as hot can be. In the new hotel, in Swiss hotels in general, I have but rarely tasted tolerable black coffee, and it is seldom hot. It is usually made of charcoal, and kept warm all the season. We have dinner as the sun gets lower (I don't think they had clocks in the little old hotel); soup with macaroni in it, omelette,—quite enough to eat. We ask for wine, and our landlord wanders down to the cellar below and sadly but hospitably opens two or three bottles for us, to see if there is anything we like. He does not charge for what we don't choose. In the little old hotel I have had coffee, dinner with wine, breakfast, and food and wine to take with me, and have been charged six francs in all. I could never have believed that my memory could have retained such kindly, such regretful, recollections of any inn in a foreign land as it does of that little old hotel.

But now, though it still stands, we *have* to go to the common new one; for, strange to say, some telepathic influence, some modernising spirit from afar, has stirred ambition in the mind of that sad old shabby landlord—the richest man in the valley, and *he* it was who built the common new hotel, and *he* has placed his nephew there (also very gentle, but quite modern to look at), and he wants us to go there. But Devero is now spoilt for me—save that the streams remain. Ah! the streams, and the beauty of the valley!

Here, as usual, the frontier mountains fall in fine cliffs on the Italian side, and the red rocks, lit up by the sun, stand up in castled grandeur. Below there is no waste, no desolation; trees, grass, bushes, and flowers all witness

to the abundance of water. And such water! Clear streams abound everywhere, now leaping in wild falls, now hurrying tumultuously along in green and amber mountain torrents.

As we descend from the Krieg-alp pass, and near Devero, we zig-zag down one picturesque and abrupt fall in the land; and, turning back, we see where the stream takes its leap. From the valley that we are to ascend next day there descend to meet us (a strange phenomenon) *two* powerful streams, in parallel beds at different levels, that join near the village with each other and with the stream that we have followed in our descent; and the whole mass, turning Italy-wards, leaps in a terrifying chaos of broken water and misty spray down, down, into the deep 'valley of Devero' by which Devero is reached from Italy.

That is a marvellous fall; the difficulty is, to get a sight of it; for dripping slopes of the steepest turf guard the approaches. I suppose it can be seen best from below; but, with crampons for the slippery turf—or even without, if one is wary—one can easily see enough to make one marvel and tremble.

Next day we set off up the double-streamed valley, making for the Scatta Minojo. I doubt if I know any walk to equal this for beauty and picturesqueness; for the natural confusion of trees, lichened rocks, and whortleberry bushes, the rushing streams, the dark lake—all are perfect. It is with regret that one leaves all this when one turns from the valley up over barer alps. In June one encounters snow higher up where in later summer all is turf, alpine flowers, and a chaos of rock.

Topping the pass you have a fine view; and there is some quality about it, as indeed there is about all the scenery in this day's walk, that produces on one a powerful

impression of remoteness from the stream of tourist life and from the machinery of travel. You *could* not here find empty tins, nor see advertisements, nor pass a chalet offering you milk and lemonade. Alps (now covered with snow) lead you down to the Vanino lake (a white level at this early date).

From the pass you can, if you have had a hint beforehand, pick out your way to Tosa. You mark the sharp notch of the Neufelgiu pass; clearly you must, for this, branch off to the left before you reach the Vanino lake. To the right, in another and lower gap, stands a pointed rock, supposed, I believe, to resemble a very erect cock (or trigger of a gun?); this marks the so-called Hahnenjoch, or Bochetta di Gallo; and for this you must pass the lake some little way and ascend a *very* steep turf slope on which nails are decidedly needed.

The former route takes you round above Tosa, so that you descend to the hotel ultimately from the north-west or so; the latter enables you to traverse the hillside (by no means an easy route to find, and quite hopeless in a mist) above the Val Formazza and so to avoid the long descent to the village of Formazza (or thereabout), and the subsequent long ascent of the valley;—an ascent interesting enough as regards the population, since in this valley German colonies are, I believe, curiously mixed with the Italian inhabitants, but terribly hot.

We glissaded, ran, and plunged down the snow-clad pastures, skirted the frozen and snow-covered lake, and—missed the Hahnenjoch route, not knowing what to look for! So we had the long descent and the hot grind up the valley.

[It is perhaps worth mentioning that when the snow has cleared away later the descent on the other side of the

Hahnenjoch is terribly stony and trying for temper, legs, and boots. In June, you can usually glissade easily down a snow-filled gully.]

At Tosa we were the first swallows of the summer, as at Binn and at Devero; and, as everywhere in June, the reception was very cordial. The family there is Swiss in origin, the name being properly Zurtannen; but they are naturalised Italians, and are called Surtano;—so I understood.

I have found this family very friendly, and the food excellent. Especially do I remember the tea, in old-fashioned china-looking cups, the real honey, the wine, and the good bread. Indeed, in this little round, here and at Devero, you get the good Italian bread, and the comforting preparations of macaroni and of maize, without getting also the garlic-and-oil sort of cookery so often met with south of the Alps.

The falls, some five hundred feet, are tremendous and soul-shaking; Corry's hat took the plunge, carried off by the wind or draught that I have always found prevailing on the bridge that spans the stream where it leaps over.

Next day we set off at 3.20 A.M. for the Hohsand pass, or rather for the Ofenhorn. Ascending the valley of the Hohsand stream, and passing high above the gorge cut by this torrent along a sort of suggestion of a goat path hewn (as it seemed to me) along the steep and rocky side, we gained the Hohsand glacier; a magnificent region ringed in by mountains. We ascended the steep snow slopes of the north-easterly face of the Ofenhorn; enjoyed for a short space the fine view from the top, and then over the snows which in June cover ice slopes and hillsides of broken stone, and even the higher pastures, we rapidly dropped, running, glissading, or with long skating steps, some 3300 feet from the summit to the alp called the Ochsenfeld

on the Albrun route below. And alp, forest path, and stream-side way, brought us home to Binn.

After that our only remaining excursion made at Binn was the ascent of the Kleine Schienhorn, the higher of two wonderfully sharp little needles that you see standing up from the ridge to your right as you ascend the valley from Binn towards the Hohsand pass. Its base gave a good but easy rock climb; but to ascend the final needle, a matter of a quarter of an hour more, you have to deal with a somewhat sensational-looking passage which baffled me some years later when alone. Our guide, however, managed it without having recourse to the usual expedient of throwing up the rope round a rock that projects conveniently.

Leaving Binn we crossed to the Concordia hut. There we had one splendid day in which we first climbed the Mönch, and then passed on to the Jungfrau; and a second day in which we climbed the Kamm by one route and came down by another.

It may be of interest to note that the Mönch, as is so often the case with snow mountains early in the season before sun and frost, working together, have turned the snow into ice, was singularly easy to ascend. As to the Kamm, I found our climb most educational as regards 'going safely'; for we hardly used the rope at all, and so each man was responsible for himself.

But Montanvert, and a try at some of the Chamonix Aiguilles and mountains, was really our aim all this time; and, on July 1, we found ourselves there, with the addition to our party of a young guide whom I had 'taken on.' He was, even then, of great promise, and would certainly have become a guide of the very first rank had not an accident a few years later added his name to the Alpine death roll.

Of the Chamonix Aiguilles I have already—and most inadequately—spoken. Experts know them ; and numbers of other visitors of the Alps have seen the magnificent photographs of Messrs. Abraham. Both classes, if they chance to read this book, will, I hope, pass over my present attempt to describe them. It is intended only for those whose ideas of the mountains are derived from Snowdon and Helvellyn.

Imagine vast walls or fortresses built of granite, their sides apparently vertical, their summits broken into fantastic towers, pyramids, and needles. Here there is, in one smooth sheet, a cliff of some hundreds of feet of height unbroken by any terrace ; there you can throw down a stone that will touch nothing for a thousand feet, and will not come to rest for several thousand. Here a ledge affords foothold, sheer cliff above and below ; there a crack gives to the cragclimber a perilous means of reaching a higher ledge—if icicles do not block his way. On the sides you feel like flies on a wall ; on the ridge itself you can sit astride ; and a summit affords room for but one at a time.

Such are the impressions given by the famous Aiguilles of the Charmoz, the Grépon, and the two Drus, not only to dwellers in the plains, but even to mountaineers who have hitherto derived their ideas of mountains from the more bulky masses of Monte Rosa or Mont Blanc.

Climbing early in the season has its *pros* and *cons*. On the big snow mountains you have the advantage of finding the slopes often covered with snow in which steps can be kicked, instead of with ice in which steps must be cut ; but, on the other hand, the ridges are often fringed with a cornice (or overhang) that threatens you with an avalanche while you are below it, and gives insecurity when you are on it—if indeed you venture so much. In the case of rock

mountains, such as these Chamonix Aiguilles, the *cons* carry the day.

As summer advances the snow lodged on the ledges, and in the cracks of these rock fortresses, melts by day, the water and wet snow freezing again at night. And until all has gone, you are apt to find rocks covered with sheets of ice, and 'chimneys' blocked with enormous icicles.

The only *pro* of which I am aware, is that early in the season it is easier to get from the glaciers on to the bases of these rock mountains that spring from them; there is snow, not ice, to climb, and the gaping *bergschrund* yawns less widely.

Our first attempt on the Charmoz was a failure. We got up very high; but at last were baffled by a 'chimney' that was choked with ice and quite unclimbable.

This Aiguille des Charmoz is a series of rocky summits crowning a rock ridge, rather than a mountain; and we had intended to gain the north-west end of the series and traverse to the south-east end.

Next day we set off again—and again at about 3.30 A.M.—to try our luck in the reverse direction; for we could count on being able to *descend* our unclimbable chimney on a doubled rope.

Ascending now at the other end, we did gain the ridge; but I remember how cold it was in the shadow, how the rocks were glazed with ice, how small a thing my courage felt at those early hours when the life is hardly awake, and how I longed for crampons! Certainly these aiguilles are a serious enough matter without the added difficulty of glazed rocks.

The top of the ridge is wonderful; no matter whether you are on one of the so-called 'summits,' some (relatively) few feet above you, or merely on a gap between two of





THE LOWLY PLATEAU OF THE ALPINE OF THE GRANDS CHAMPS.



them. Your right boot would fall towards the Mer de Glace, your left would deal destruction to travellers on the Glacier des Nantillons.

From the ridge it was by no means easy to gain the south-east summit; even our guides, good men, tried two routes before they found a feasible one. But at 10.15 A.M. we were there, 11,188 feet above the sea; and, speaking for myself, I may say that it was rather the marvellous situation than the view that I enjoyed. Heliograph signals of an elementary description were exchanged with the hotel (for our Italian guide always carried a pocket looking-glass for toilette purposes); and at 11 A.M. we went on.

It was a strange traverse. Poised high in the air, with huge precipices below on either side, *and* exposed to the view of telescope-users at the Montanvert, we went through the most wonderful gymnastic performances (or rather our guides did) in which skill and daring in climbing were strangely combined with skill and experience in manœuvring with the rope. It was 2.10 P.M. when we reached the (lower) north-west summit that marks the limit of the usual traverse.

A descent in which the doubled rope was used much brought us past our iced chimney of the day before; and we got home at 8.30 P.M.—a day of seventeen hours out.

Our next plan was to go to Courmayeur over the Col du Géant, climbing the Aiguille du Géant (13,157 feet) by the way; go up to the Cabane du Dôme which lies on the Italian side of Mont Blanc; ascend Mont Blanc (15,781 feet) from there, and descend to Chamonix by the usual route past the Grands Mulets. The Aiguille du Géant, that strange finger of rock, high on the Savoy-Italy frontier ridge, that appears to lean forward past the vertical, has been spoiled for climbers by the ropes that festoon it. But

none the less it is a wonderful sensation to look down from its summit ; and it is well worth climbing.

From Courmayeur we mounted the Glacier de Miage (*Italien*) and reached the Cabane du Dôme. This is perched up, over the Glacier du Dôme, at a height of about 10,200 feet above the sea. There we found an elderly man, over sixty I guessed, who was with two guides, and who intended to climb Mont Blanc the next day. He seemed terribly done up, but full of resolution. The guides, I think, went out that night to prepare for next day's start by cutting ice steps by moonlight.

We set out at 2.30 A.M. ; and as we traversed the slopes at the side of the Glacier du Dôme and saw the mighty size of everything, the huge flanks of Mont Blanc more impressive than even ordinarily in the silence and the moonlight, I fully endorsed the verdict of one of our guides, who said : ' Truly Mont Blanc is the king of the mountains ! '

Skirting the Dôme du Goûter we reached the Vallot huts—which were erected for scientific purposes, but can serve as refuges too—at 6.45., and had an hour's rest.

Here we came across parties from Chamonix ; a broad track in the snow led downward towards the Grands Mulets, and moss, let fall by porters who were carrying it up to serve as stuffing between the double walls of the Jansen Observatory at the summit, littered the white surface ; the best of the day was, for me at any rate, over.

We had been disturbed to notice that the two other guides had hurried their elderly traveller along at our pace, or even faster. We now saw them move on ; but the pace had told on the poor man. He had pluck enough ; but his strength failed him, and he had to turn back. I much feared that this would be his last attempt.

All know that the summit of Mont Blanc is too high for

the view to be impressive ; for everything is dwarfed. Only distance is left to appeal to the imagination.

I had the curiosity to try my pulse immediately on arriving at the top, and found it to be only about a hundred, which is barely twice its usual (abnormally slow) rate. I should say that it has often been as high after a run to catch the train.

People talk too readily, I think, of ' mountain sickness ' in the Alps. In my experience of some thirty years I have come across no illness on these mountains, save in the case of persons manifestly far too stout or else still out of condition after a confined winter life. On the other hand, when camping out in the Andes with a very strong and hardy Swiss, I was told by him of what would seem to be a true mountain sickness, great weakness and loss of breath, that he experienced when over about 19,000 or 20,000 feet above the sea.

Our descent to Chamonix from the summit was, owing to the favourable condition of the snow, and our somewhat unwise hurry down the hillside below, phenomenally fast. Omitting halts, we took but four hours and three minutes !

So our whole day had really been quite a short one, notwithstanding the magnificent size of our mountain.

A guideless day on the Petit Charmoz, in which we had a very narrow escape from falling stones, and learned the dangers of the couloir that descends towards the Mer de Glace, followed ; and then an attempt, in full force, on the Petit Dru.

For this fine climb I have, in all, set out five times ; twice we were turned back after a hard fight, twice we were driven back by the weather before we had well begun, and the last time success was attained.

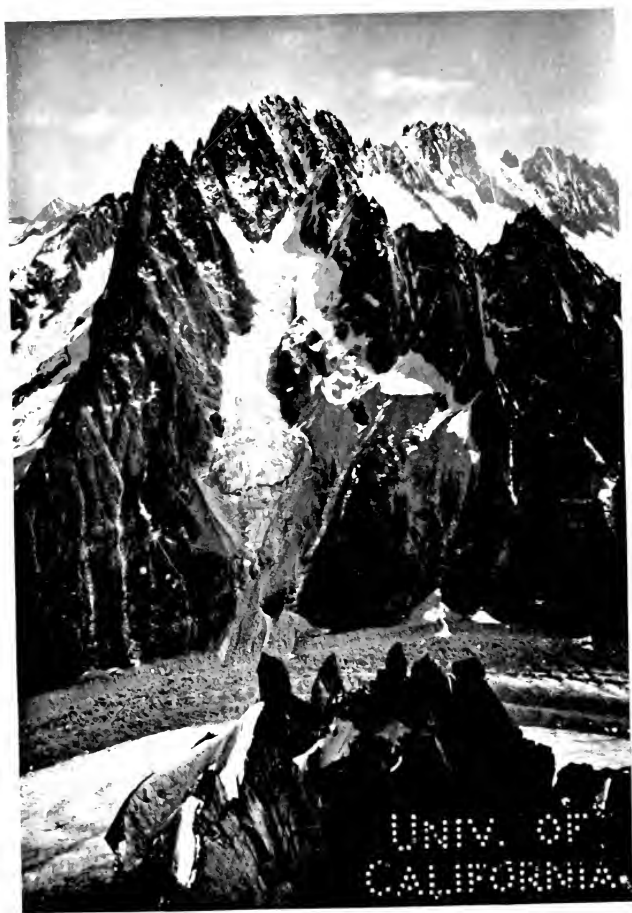
In the illustration, the central and highest peak, lying

furthest back, is the great Aiguille Verte (13,540 feet). The two Drus form the double-headed summit seen to the left, the Petit Dru (12,450 feet) being that nearest the valley, or most to the left of all. The steep glacier seen in the middle is the Glacier de Charpoua. It is usual, I believe, to sleep on the rocks that divide the glacier into two; but on each occasion we started from the hotel.

From these rocks you mount over snow until it is easy to gain the glacier to your left; when a circuit, more or less on a level, across the glacier takes you to the rocks at the base of the mountain. To describe the route after this would be difficult; I will only say that it lies on the whole to the left of the gulley seen descending in the middle of the Dru mass. We set out from Montanvert at 12.45 night, and reached the sleeping place on the rocks at 4 A.M. On the way one has to cross some of those smooth and sloping rocks on which the guides' sureness of foot shows to best advantage as compared with the amateurs. They walk upright; we (as a rule) feel inclined to grovel and cling.

We crossed to the rocks of our mountain, and found ice everywhere where it should not be! I remember vividly a place where our leading guide, attempting to cross a gap on iced rocks, got for a moment into a very precarious position where he could neither get up nor down. It seemed to me that, but for the promptitude of our second man in coming to the rescue and steadying his foot, we might have had a smash. After further efforts on our guides' part we were driven back; the mountain was in an impossible condition. We reached Montanvert after a (to me) somewhat adventuresome day, twenty-one hours from our time of start.

The last climb of my season was a grand day on the Aiguille de Blaitière, a mountain that I had not visited since 1887. It does not rank with the Drus or the Charmoz



THE MOUNTAIN VIEW, DECEMBER 1953, MOUNT EVEREST, 29,000 FEET, MOUNTAIN OF THE  
GEORGE CHARTER.

THE JOURNAL  
OF THE  
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or the Grépon ; but it is a formidable enough peak as compared with many of the giants of Switzerland (see illustration, p. 66). Surely some day an accident will occur on the Glacier des Nantillons ? Not only have you to cross a wide avalanche-gulley worn in the glacier by ice shooting down from above ; not only have you to recross the glacier higher up under a long line of threatening seracs perched high above you ; but I have seen a veritable chaos of fallen ice blocks, the overspill of an avalanche too big for the gulley to carry off, covering a region in which any party might have been having lunch, so safe is it usually reckoned.

For this climb we joined forces with Mr. Alfred Holmes, who was taking as guide our landlord M. Alfred Simond. Hitherto I had seen M. Simond only in his capacity of landlord ; and neither dress, voice, nor manner had suggested to me the man of the mountains. Only his hands had betrayed him ; their power. [Notice a guide's hands !] Now, however, he looked the guide all over.

My great interest lay in seeing the place where, in 1887, we had, as I supposed, gone wrong ; and had, in the return, narrowly escaped destruction. I found that while it was a safe course to top that last gendarme (see p. 67), and to lower ourselves on the other side on a doubled rope, yet the route that we took was quite easy now that the ' blind gulley ' was filled with plenty of good snow instead of having a lining of hard ice, as was the case in 1887, later in the season. The higher, or southern summit, is double ; and this time we climbed both of its peaks.

We came down, the last part of the way, in mist and a thunderstorm ; and there was a still more tremendous storm in the night. The thunder roared and crashed, and the wind drove the rain right down my narrow room ;—and I slept through it all !

So, with a most successful day, ended my season of 1895.

## CHAPTER X

Why climb the mountains? I will tell thee why,

I love the eye's free sweep from craggy rim,  
 I love the free bird poised at lofty ease,  
 And the free torrent's far-upounding hymn ;  
 I love to leave my littleness behind  
 In the low vale where little cares are great,

*J. S. Blackie.*

BERNER-OBERLAND AND ZERMATT IN 1896—GUIDELESS  
 CLIMBING AT AROLLA—CHAMONIX WITH GUIDES, 1897

ON June 15, 1896, I slept once more at Leukerbad ; and next day, with rucksack and axe, I set off up over the Gemmi. The top was reached in a short time, and the snow up above was no longer a surprise to me.

But there was one surprise, and a sad one. In the past autumn, just as the cattle were to be driven down from the 'Spitalmatte,' a fertile alp with Arolla pines and larches at one end of it, there fell in the night a huge mass of the glacier that lies high up on the mountain Altels. The cattle and the men (fourteen of the latter, I think) were overwhelmed, the trees were blown down, though out of the direct line, and the whole grazing ground covered with stones and ice. As I saw it now, it was a desolate wilderness, no grass to be seen ; and the path at one end had recently been cut out again in ice. The broken fragments of trees—bones, were there, too ?—blown up against the cliffs far beyond, bore witness to the strength of the blast of air produced by the falling avalanche.

High up on Altels was a white patch with a darker line across it ; it looked nothing. Yet the white patch was the glacier, a portion of which had produced all this devastation ; and the dark line was a cliff of ice some one hundred and fifty to two hundred feet high.

At Kandersteg I engaged Abraham Müller (father) for ten days' climbing and wandering.

We ascended Altels (11,930 feet), when I passed, close by, the ice cliff spoken of. Of the view from the summit, Mr. Hinchcliff writes : 'The summit commands the whole of the Oberland group, as well as the Monte Rosa and Saasgrat groups ; while to the north there is an exquisite view down the Kanderthal to the foot of the lake of Thun.'

Later on we went to the new and comfortable Blümlisalp hut, constructed of wood ; and there we spent two pleasant days. We climbed the Blümlisalphorn (12,040 feet), and the Morgenhorn (11,905 feet) ; and looked down those impressive cliffs into the Gasterthal. It is these dark cliffs, often streaked with horizontal lines of snow lodged on the ledges, that give the characteristic aspect to the 'Blümlis-alp' when seen from far away to the south.

On the rocks of the Wilde Frau, another and lower summit, I saw again that remarkable bird the wall-creeper. It appears to me to be of about the size of a lark, and is so unusual in appearance and character of flight that it must attract the attention of any moderately observant person. The colours are black (or some dark shade), a beautiful grey, and a rose colour ; and there is what I should describe as a sort of pearl edging to the tail, though I don't know whether this expression is right. The beak is slender and curved. The flight makes one think of a bat, or a butterfly, or suggests that one is looking at some tropical bird. It

seems to cling to rocks and run along them in a curious way. I have seen them chiefly on bare cliffs in wild regions, as *e.g.* in the present case on the cliffs of the Wilde Frau, also on those of the Pas de Chèvres near Arolla, on cliffs over the Ritz glacier (west side of Mittaghorn, near Saas Fee), on cliffs of bare rock in the Trift gorge (where a pair had a nest in an inaccessible place); also on the top of the Eggishorn, near the Märgelen See, on the Gemmi, and among rocks and grass (there were a pair of birds here) near Zervreila in East Switzerland as one went towards the Fanella pass.

In each case its appearance almost startled me, it looked so unusual a sort of bird.

Abraham Müller appeared to know it, and told me it had a song and a wonderful voice; 'You could not believe that a bird could produce such notes,' he said.

On June 24, we scrambled up the Kleine Lohnerhorn by easy but rotten rocks; and on the 25th reached the Mutt-horn hut in a steady fall of snow.

Next day snow fell and there was mist; so peaks were out of the question, and we settled to go across to Ried only, over the snow ridge of the Petersgrat.

Abraham set off confidently, but we soon got astray. Then came *my* turn! I made him return to the hut while yet we could just see our tracks, and then I got out the map and took directions. Sallying forth again, I now steered him from behind (he needed it!) and so we reached the proper place on the grat. On the other side it was clear weather.

At Ried we were the first of the season, and got the usual warm welcome.

The next day being misty, Abraham advised waiting; so I strolled to Kippel. I spoke with an old guide there

who told me that he had been the first over the Löttschen-lücke some thirty years ago (about 1866, that would be). He said that Kippel was a very old place, one thousand five hundred years perhaps ; and some houses in it were five hundred years old (?).

I met the kaplan with whom I had talked in 1894. He made me promise that next time I would come to drink wine with him at his house. I remembered his invitation later, as will be seen. The old guide, by the way, grew red currants, and said he made wine of them.

In the afternoon we went up with a shabby old man—*very* rich, Abraham said—to visit his cows. He took a small bag of salt for them ; and, in order to carry this (he could have put it in a pocket) he saddled himself with an enormous basket ; one of these long things that go on the back and would hold a man inside. Well ! it is only a matter of degree ; for I prefer carrying sandwiches in my rucksack to having uncomfortably bulging pockets. The cows seemed quite mad to get the salt.

I commented to him on the extraordinarily flowery and weedy look of the usual Alpine hayfield ; sometimes there appear to be much more weeds than grass. But he told me that many seeming ‘weeds’ were very good for milk ; one such, I think, was a hemlock-looking thing that had struck me as quite spoiling the pasture.

Certainly it is worth while grinding at German ! One’s relations to the mountain folk, and so to Switzerland, become so much more human when one can chat with a priest here and a peasant there. Most of ‘climbing Switzerland’ speaks German ; but French should be learned too, if possible.

On June 28, Abraham and I crossed the Beich pass ; an easy matter (see p. 119).

When about to take the mule path, low down on the other side, for the Bel-alp, we found that an extraordinary breaking up of rock was going on high above ; and a considerable reach of this path, traversed daily, in the full season, by parties with mules, was being swept by blocks of stone—quite impassable. I have never seen such a bombardment of a frequented road !

At the Bel-alp, Abraham Müller and I parted with mutual regret. He had, I found, so appreciated the real companionship that had sprung up during these ten days ; we had, indeed, been very much thrown together while alone in the huts. And ever since then we have remained friends, exchanging letters at least once a year. And since ski-ing has taken me to Adelboden more than once, I have kept up with the sons also. These friendly relations with Swiss families add much to the pleasure of revisiting the country, especially as one gets older and the mind is less keenly set on the actual climbing.

From the Bel-alp I walked alone, with a heavy sack and a rope, to Fiesch, keeping above the Rhone valley as far as Lax. At Fiesch I met my friend Corry, as agreed.

Next day we took a walk to Binn and saw some of the friendly Schmid family, who made us promise ‘*unbedingt*’ to take Ernen on our way back, and visit the family home where the others were. Such a pleasant home that was ! The main sitting-room was on the first floor ; spacious, though low ; and with many windows. All was of wood.

The view, and the old village tree, were shown off to us, and we quite felt that we were welcomed as friends and not as tourists.

The same day we got to Stalden, and thither came Corry’s guide by appointment.

I saw at St. Niklaus the young guide who had been our second man last year, and found he could come for ten days, so I engaged him.

Bad weather set in for a time, and we had to fill up our days with a climb on the Trifthorn, a ropeless scramble on the Unter-Gabelhorn, the passage to Saas Fee over the Alphubeljoch in a mist (an experience of which I made use in a guideless expedition some years later), and a return by the Ried pass. In better weather we had a really good though short rock climb up the Riffelhorn from the glacier (up the couloir called the 'Matterhorn couloir'), and ascended also the summit of Monte Rosa called the 'Nord-end' (15,132 feet).

In an attempt on the Weisshorn we failed, owing to the heavily corniced condition of the arête. For this mountain we had the novel experience of sleeping out under a rock, splashed all night long by falling water; the hut had been destroyed by an avalanche.

And then—all too soon—came my last expedition of the year; the traverse of the Rothhorn (13,855 feet). But it was worth several ordinary expeditions; it was simply magnificent!

For this we slept at the Trift inn (7800 feet).

From this side the mountain is climbed as follows. You climb up over rocks and steep snow to the arête seen in the foreground of the illustration. [The point of view of this was rather too far off to give a very adequate impression of the size and steepness of the summit-mass.] You then advance along the arête; and, where it abutts against the mountain, you traverse across the face to the left, ascending somewhat, and so reach a couloir (clearly seen) that leads you up to the notch, or *Gabel*, that is conspicuous to the left of, and lower than, the double summit.

From this notch you look towards Zinal.

You then pass out of sight and climb upward, part of the route being over smooth slabs where care is needed; an accident once occurred here. The left hand summit is a lower summit; you pass it by 'this' side, over the tremendous precipice, seen in shadow in the figure, that falls from the double summit; and the highest summit, that to the right, is easily gained. The descent to Zinal is entirely out of sight here.

I began badly; for something in the food had poisoned me, and I was very ill until the climb and the summit air restored me.

Setting out at 1 A.M., we reached at 5.10 A.M. the point where the traverse to the left begins. This traverse was bad at the time, owing to the ice and snow on the rocks. We gained the couloir, which was not at all bad, and soon reached the Gabel. The ascent over the smooth rocks on the other side was rendered singularly safe and easy owing to their being covered with an adherent layer of good snow up which we *walked*.

As we passed round on 'this' side of the left hand summit, Corry told me to look down between my legs. To what a terrific depth my eye plunged down that sheer precipice! The top was delightful; we stayed there three-quarters of an hour, and enjoyed the fine view. Naturally, our gigantic neighbour, the Weisshorn, was one object of interest; and the Matterhorn, and all the great Valais mountains, and many far distant peaks, would have given us subjects for recognition and study for twice the time of our stay.

On the arête leading down on the other side, there are two 'gendarmes'; the first is a big one, the descent from which requires care—there is, or was once, a fixed rope





*From the summit of the Zinal Rothorn.*

THE SUMMIT OF THE ZINAL ROTHORN.

NO. VIII  
ANNEX

there ; the second is smaller and has a singularly sharp, knife-like top, as I found when I passed again in 1901.

Both of these were now rendered difficult by ice and snow, and we had to avoid the second one altogether, managing to get round it.

[By the way, in 1901 this latter struck me as *weak*. Will it ever break when a party is climbing over it ?]

It will have been noticed that climbing early in the season has its advantages and disadvantages. In this climb we were sometimes helped and sometimes hindered by the lingering ice or snow. The serious part of the descending arête was over at 12.45, and we reached Zinal at 4.45. How changed Zinal was ! Though little Madame Epiney was the same as ever, and the old chambermaid Marie too, the Hôtel Durand had been rebuilt, and was very 'stylish.' There were other hotels also ; and the primitive village (one more) had vanished for ever.

With this delightful traverse of the Rothhorn ended my summer.

While I was at Kandersteg climbing with Abraham Müller I noticed one day a sort of pedlar bearing a wooden box on his back. I asked Abraham who and what the man was. He told me that he was an Italian *scorpion-seller*. At my request, Abraham wrote me, later, a letter which I keep, elucidating this matter. I here give the substance of this letter, having the copy by me as I write. He tells me that every year Italian scorpion-dealers traverse the Swiss valleys to sell scorpions for the preparation of *scorpion-oil* ; especially the mountain valleys, since in the plains and towns this oil can be obtained at the chemists who get their scorpions direct from Italy. This scorpion-oil is a very ancient and indispensable household-remedy,

and its use is at least some hundreds of years old ; so he believes.

It is prepared by putting some ten living scorpions into a half-litre of good olive oil, cold, and leaving them there some twelve to twenty-four hours until they are dead. You then pour the oil off into another vessel, and it is ready for use. The application is the same whether the patient be man or beast.

In the case of snake-bites, you wash the place out with salt water first, and then rub the oil into the bite and all over the swollen part, rubbing always in the direction of the bite. So also with poisonous insect bites.

In the case of cuts and bruises due to other causes you rub the swollen parts towards the cut as above ; but do not rub the oil into the cut, as it is ' too sharp.'

This oil is, in general, for external use. But there are people who, when suffering from severe internal pain of *which they do not know the cause*, take some drops of the scorpion oil internally in Camomile tea (!).

So writes Abraham Müller.

I remember that, when a discussion was going on in *Nature* (the scientific journal) on the subject of savage, and other, remedies or antidotes for snake bites, I sent a translation of this letter to the editor, and, after some hesitation on his part, it was inserted.

I always wish that I had met Mr. Corry long before ; for it was not until 1897 that I got my first real guideless time, and then it was due to his initiative ; he set me going.

On June 20, 1897, he, another friend Mr. Brant, and I found ourselves at the Kurhaus at Arolla. We were bent on a regular guideless campaign among the mountains there, and I was, not ' by merit,' but owing to my local

knowledge, raised to the 'bad eminence' of leading guide.

The Kurhaus was barely finished, and there was but one visitor besides ourselves. He had with him Jossi of Grindelwald, a very good guide. I remember fires lighted in fireplaces devoid of hearthstones, and stoves over which you tumbled when you met them in the dark in unexpected places. One funny little waiter attended to us. He knew some English, but *would* use 'am' instead of 'have.' We stood 'I am no Bouvier to-day' pretty well; but when it came to a deprecating 'I am only half a bottle of last year's beer,' it was too much for our gravity. Of many of the climbs—the Za (by a couloir that we afterwards saw swept with stones quite early in the morning when I had thought it safe), Perroc, the Pigne, and others—I will not speak; two stand out in my memory as the best, and I am sure that two will be enough for my readers.

Standing back from the valley, and not courting the view, as do Mont Collon, the Pigne, and the range of the Grandes Dents, rises the bold group called the Aiguilles Rouges, a range of rock summits. It lies to the west, hidden by the nearer slopes on your right, when you are passing up the valley from Haudères to Arolla, and have got to the point at which the Petite Dent de Veisevi towers over you to your left, or to the east. A fine view of these aiguilles is obtained from the said Petite Dent, or from the high land near the Col de Zarmine south of these. The range consists of the north summit, a lower and less interesting peak that has a way of getting out of sight from many points of view and is not well seen in the illustration here given; then the fine central and highest peak (11,975 feet), to whose height the illustration hardly does justice; and south of this, and separated from it by a deep gap, a longer many-toothed

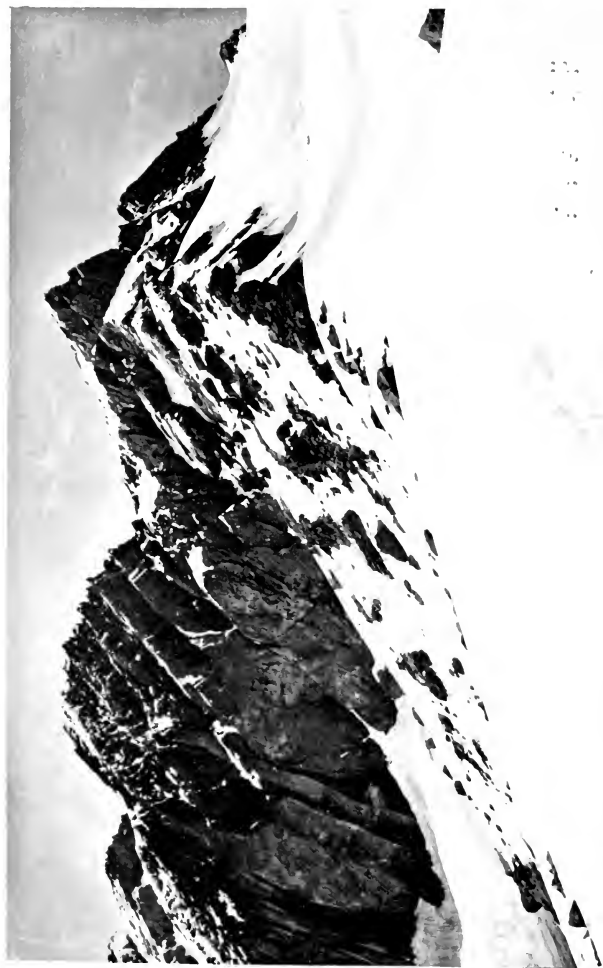
summit called the south peak. South of this the ridge becomes milder in character and descends to the Col des Ignes. On the west, rotten and steep cliffs fall to the little Glacier de Darbonneire in the upper part of the Val d'Hérémence. On the east, the north peak and part of the central peak have below them the high-placed upper glacier of the Aiguilles Rouges ; while the rest of the range looks down on the lower glacier—whose level is much below that of the upper glacier. An arête, easily attained from either glacier, reaches up against the face of the central peak ; and it is by this arête that the latter is usually (?) attacked when the traverse is not aimed at.

But our intention was to climb along the arête from the Col des Ignes, ascend the main teeth of the south peak, and also the central peak, and then get down as we could ; the north peak we intended to leave alone.

This climb the local guide (myself) did not know ; but I had understood that the proper course was to keep to the ridge as much as one could ; and, if a difficulty had to be circumvented, to go round on the east side, and never to touch the more rotten west face. Mr. Slingsby, in 1887, had found that if these principles were attended to, the evil reputation of the mountain for danger from loose rocks and falling stones was undeserved.

We set off at 2.30 A.M., gained the arête at its south end at 6.30, and at about ten o'clock had gained the top of the highest of the many summits of the south peak.

Some quite exciting climbing, to which the element of exploration lent a special zest, brought us by 3.45 P.M. to the deep gap between the south and central peaks. Here there came on a thunderstorm of sorts, and it seemed advisable to get down as soon as we could. Below us was the big drop to the lower glacier, and I remembered how



*Photograph by G. H. H. H. H.*

THE AGGREGATE ROUGES OF AROCLIA, FROM THE EAST.





smooth and forbidding these cliffs looked at the bottom. [This drop is not well seen in the illustration, being partly hidden by the sloping side of the arête in the foreground.] Before us lay the central and highest peak. Should we try to get down, or go on? It seemed wrong to continue in such weather; and yet, if we reached the next summit we should there, though higher, be actually nearer *terra firma* than where we were; for there was that arête reaching up from the higher glacier. So we decided to go on.

We found the ascent easy enough, steep though it had looked. We passed the summit, descended a little way towards the north peak, and then boldly struck down the east face to get to our friendly arête.

Well; we got down. But I do well remember a (to my imagination) critical ten minutes in which I was below, the middle man was stuck, and our last man—Corry, who had the post of honour as our best rock climber—could not move until the middle man made place for him, and did not seem at all happy where he was. But the crisis passed, and soon afterwards, with a help down a last awkward place from the doubled rope hitched over a rock, we reached our arête, and by it the safe levels of the upper glacier. And not too soon; for it now got dark, and a lantern was needed.

How mysterious was that return home by the light of a lantern; the more perplexing as the wind kept blowing the candle out! The dark parts of the moraines appeared far off—they might have been on the other side of the valley; white patches of snow on them seemed near. I had thought that I knew the country well; but I felt very much at sea. At last, at 12.15 at night, we got in.

The second best of our climbs was certainly our traverse of Mont Collon. For me it was considerably tinged with

anxiety, however, since I had to remember the way after ten years.

I will not describe the mountain or the climb again (see p. 76); I will only give two passages.

We went up at the back, as I had done with guides in 1887, going round the mountain by the Arolla glacier and turning up a steep tributary glacier; and I had remembered that when we had gained one summit, we had, in order to reach the main summit, to cross a singular gap or cleft. I *think* that one party in early days was turned back by it, and called it an 'impassable chasm'!

Certainly it did look rather appalling. One had to descend a very steep face and hit off an exceedingly narrow neck at the bottom, to right and left of which precipices fell. The other side looked nearly vertical. But difficulties often vanish when taken in detail; the descent to the neck proved to be neither difficult nor dangerous, and the 'vertical' other side turned out to be climbable almost without the use of one's hands!

We reached the top safely, and had an enjoyable halt there of some forty minutes.

I have already indicated how, on leaving the top, you make for the direction of the distant Pigne<sup>1</sup> and descend the rounded dome of snow until you strike the sharp north-westerly rock arête that is seen in profile from the hotel on the right of the mountain.

Trusting to my memory, I therefore led off 'for the Pigne.' The slope got steeper, and we seemed to be intending to walk over into space; still no rocks. We crossed the tracks of Jossi and his party, to whom I had described the route; evidently they had searched for the arête and

<sup>1</sup> Or of the Col de Vuignette.

failed to find it, and had gone down another way ; still no rocks ! Silence fell on the party, and I seemed to hear doubts in my companions' minds as to whether this *could* be the way. Soon we had to cut steps down.

I have never in my life been so glad at seeing red rocks as I was then, when at last they rose to meet us ! And not only had we found them, but the snow cap had shrunk in the ten years, and they were easy of access ; there was no overhang of snow.

After that my anxiety was over ; and I enjoyed the rest of the climb as much as did my companions.

Our guideless fortnight came to an end ; and two men whom we had engaged, the elder a very good man, but (owing to an accident) not at his best then, the younger a lad of about nineteen or not much more, but enormously strong, came to take charge.

To me, much as I had enjoyed our time, it was something of a relief to be no longer ' local guide ' ; I little knew that our accidents were yet to come !

We planned to go to Chamonix (or rather Montanvert) by the high-level route, climbing the Combin on the way.

We passed to Mauvoisin, crossed the next ridge, and slept at the Panossière hut by the side of the Corbassière glacier. Referring to the illustration of page 74 I will say that the glacier there seen down below in the foreground is the upper part of the Corbassière glacier. You ascend this and mount the smooth snow slopes from the right ; pass up to the left along the ' corridor ' that slopes up below, and under fire from, the highest ice cliffs seen—a dangerous passage ; and so reach a shoulder seen in the illustration away to the left of the summit. This last, as already said, lies back. Arrived at the shoulder, the proper course is to slope up to the right on to the highest

snow plateau ; and then, making a circuit, to reach the top over moderate slopes that are free from dangerous crevasses. Of the two high summits seen, the higher is that to the right.

I remembered all this ; but our leading man, who had (it seemed) forgotten the route, took us from the shoulder over the ridge—a route that I found decidedly uncomfortable.

When the time came to descend, the younger guide led ; the chief guide, as usual, taking the part of last man down. I tried to impress upon our leader that we must make a circuit and avoid the steep summit-slope with its crevasses ; the more, as we had already found that the snow bridges were rotten that day owing to the warmth of the wind. I was very disquieted when I saw him strike off in a direction that was a compromise between our (wrong) way up, and the usual very safe way down.

Our order of going was as follows : First the young guide ; then, at a considerable interval, came Brant ; between him and Corry came the knot which connected a sixty feet rope to which the first two were tied with a hundred feet rope that carried Corry, myself, and the senior guide. [It is well, on a big snow mountain, to have considerable intervals between the members of a party.]

We were descending obliquely a steep snow slope on which crevasses were (we knew) likely to run horizontally, and we were, I should say, nearing that high crevasse that is seen in the illustration rather below and to the left of the summit. Indeed, that may have been the very crevasse in question. Hence, if our leader broke in, we should be in danger of being pulled in sideways in detail. In such a situation, the strong position is to be in a line

directly up and down the slope, so that the rest of the party could act as one man in holding the leader.

Finding the young guide disinclined to listen to doubts as to the safety of his route, Corry and I set about attaining the 'strong position' by wheeling up the slope; and the guide at the end behind us, who of course knew what we were about, did the same. And now came our accident as *I* remember it.

We three last men had hardly got into position, when I heard a muffled sound and a cry; I was dragged off my feet, and made strenuous efforts to get my toes and axe into the snow; and then, after a short drag down the slope, I found that we three were clinging on above a crevasse, while the two front men had disappeared.

There is no doubt but that, had we followed the guide, we should have all gone in. It was the circuit uphill that had put us into the position which just enabled us to hold.

Our leader, it seems, had trusted a bridge that was rotten; his over-confidence had led him even to reject Brant's offer to fix his axe, and wind his rope round it. The bridge had given way, his fall had jerked Brant in, and the tug due to both had nearly taken us others down also.

Into the manœuvres required to extricate us from our dilemma I will not enter.

I will only say—*firstly* (and this is a fact of great significance, as bearing on what I have said on p. 10), that we three men found it absolutely impossible to raise Brant alone, when (later) only he was left on the rope, and still less to get him through or over the over-hanging upper lip of the crevasse; *secondly*, that our extrication was due to the strength and skill of the man who had made the blunder; for he worked his way up the other side of the

crevasse by cutting hand-, and foot-, hold with an axe, having succeeded in finding footing (as I understood him to tell me) on the debris that had blocked up the crevasse below him where the sides closed in to each other.

When once the two were up, on the far side of the crevasse, we cut the rope at the knot (all knots had been pulled too tight to be untied), and then we three went back and round the crevasse and joined the others later.

It was decidedly an experience. But since the accident was evidently due to want of judgment on the young guide's part, and the danger was quite needlessly incurred, it was not of the sort that affects one's nerve afterwards. We were then rather new hands at guideless climbing, and so had a mistaken disinclination to interfering with a professional guide—however young he might be. Later on we should not have dreamed of allowing any guide to do what we knew well to be unwise, just to save a little trouble in going round. Considering how young the guide was, only about nineteen, we must certainly share the blame.

Two or three days later the young guide met, and described the accident to, a senior, a leading man in the profession; and I should not think that he would have exaggerated the danger or his own imprudence. From the way in which this older guide then spoke to me about the matter I was confirmed in my conviction that we had indeed had a very narrow escape.

Descending to Bourg St. Pierre and going round by Orsières into the Val Ferret, we found ourselves two days later crossing the magnificent Col d'Argentière, a pass of which I shall speak later; and from the Glacier d'Argentière a traverse of the mountain side brought us to the Mer de Glace and Montanvert. Here Brant left us.

While the younger guide was having a bad throat seen to, Corry and I and the senior guide made an interesting traverse of the Periades—a mountain that lies behind the Pic du Tacul at the head of the Mer de Glace.

But the climb that has impressed itself on my memory, and that made a somewhat dramatic finish to my season, was the second attempt that Corry and I made on the Petit Dru.

If the reader will turn to the illustration of it given on p. 136, and to my description of the way in which it is attacked, it will be unnecessary for me to do more than relate the incidents that stand out in my memory most clearly in connection with this second unsuccessful attempt.

This time the mountain was in splendid order ; the rocks as dry as a bone. The iced traverse of 1895 was no longer iced, chimneys beyond it were no longer choked with icicles, and all went merrily ; we seemed destined this time to reach our summit.

At last we came to some sloping rocks, in a crack of which was jammed a *piton* (or iron spike with a ring at the top) evidently to be used for a doubled rope in descent. No doubt we were on the right track ! But from these rocks there led upward a steep chimney crowned at the top by a rock that overhung it. It can be imagined that exit from such a chimney is difficult.

Our guides could not have been in good form this day ; they tried the place and failed. But after some hour or more had been wasted in seeking vainly for another route, our younger man did manage it, helped by a push from below given with the head of an axe by the senior man. Both Corry and I were glad of the rope here.

Soon afterwards we came to a terrace ; and, passing through a natural arch—this identifies the spot—we found

ourselves on a ledge that narrowed further on and disappeared at (or a little way past) a corner. From this ledge falls one of those tremendous precipices that so impress any one who is used to the average mountain of the Valais or of the Berner-Oberland. Evidently we had to get up from this ledge; for it came to an end. But where, and how?

Above the broader part there was no break in the rocks that could lead to the top; but above the narrow part further on there was an opening upward whose lip was a smaller ledge some twelve feet or so above the lower one. These twelve feet, however, were there of smooth and unclimbable rock; and a fixed rope, fastened to a *piton* above, that might have been hanging down conveniently, had been blown up in the winter and frozen into the snow, quite out of reach.

Our landlord, M. Alfred Simond, told us afterwards that the usual way was to climb up a little from the broader part of our ledge, and then slope up to the right until the hand grasped the upper ledge; but that it was a very difficult bit of climbing. [This was in fact how my guide did it four years later.] Our younger guide tried this, but could not manage it.

It was too tantalising! Twice had we been turned back near the start by bad weather; once had we contended with impossible iced rocks, and spent twenty-one hours in vain! And now everything was in perfect condition! Desperate ills have desperate remedies, and—we were all considerably younger then—we tried to *force* the passage.

I will not go into details, but will only say that we nearly broke our necks, and that it was the younger guide, whose alertness, strength, and extraordinary power of grip, saved



the situation. [He confided to me later that he was 'all of a tremble' for three-quarters of an hour afterwards

Certainly those few moments have, since then, powerfully impressed on my mind the virtue of knowing when you are beaten. But, at the time, we two amateurs (see pp. 69, 201) were not affected by the incident.

Well ; we *were* beaten, once more. We set about our descent with heavy hearts ; but since *pitons* and convenient rocks give good hold for the doubled rope, which is always much used in the descent of this mountain, we had no anxious moments going down. Indeed, save for our disappointment, there was much to enjoy, as the mountain is in all parts an interesting one. My diary tells me that we had had again a twenty-one hour day (or slightly more) when we reached the hotel.

That brought my season to a close. I had a day or two more left ; but, apart from the fact that my fingers were worn to the quick by the granite of the Petit Dru, the weather became bad, and any further expedition was rendered impossible.

## CHAPTER XI

*They* will lie beside the torrent, just as you were wont to do,  
 With the woodland green around them and a snowfield shining  
 through :

They will tread the higher pastures, where celestial breezes blow,  
 While the valley lies in shadow and the peaks are all aglow—  
 Where the airs of heaven blow

'Twixt the pine woods and the snow,  
 And the shades of evening deepen in the valley far below :

*A. D. Godley.*

BINN—ZERMATT—AROLLA—THE ENGADINE—THE GRAIANS  
 —AROLLA AGAIN

THE summer of 1898 was not happy in its choice of weather ; and I suspect that many others besides myself had an uneventful season. It was this summer that I first met Mr. Cockin, whose deeds as a climber are well known to the initiated. The personal feeling of loss that those who knew him experienced when he was killed on the Weisshorn testify to his qualities as mountain comrade and friend. I very soon saw that he was a good man on snow and ice ; and later on was more and more struck with a quality in which he outclassed all amateurs whom I have known, and rivalled the guides, viz., surefootedness, or reliance on foothold. Most of us amateurs like something to lay hold of ; Cockin tramped securely across sloping slabs of rock, and seemed quite comfortable on a hard snow slope could he find foothold on a stone frozen into it !

We met (Corry, Brant, Cockin, and myself) at Binn ; but of the guideless climbs (one up Pizzo Fizzo again) and wanderings there I will say nothing.

We passed to Berisal and tried Monte Leone ; but we got astray in the blinding mist and had to retreat. I well remember how we turned up a ridge to our left too soon, and how one had to prod the whiteness with an axe to see whether it was snow or empty space.

An attempt to cross the Zwischenbergenjoch (between the Weissmies and the Portjengrat) from the village of Simplon to Saas im Grund was in like manner baffled by mist. We ascended the Val Varia which led to this pass, and which we had reached by a short cut instead of going round by Gondo, until the end of the north lateral moraine of the Gemein-alp glacier was reached.

Dense mist shrouded everything. But a momentary break enabled directions to be taken ; and so we started off, plunging once more into mere whiteness, up the glacier. Here is a bit of my experience as regards walking in mist.

On the level, it is said that wanderers in mist tend to circle to the left—possibly left-legged people circle to the right ?

But I am convinced that on snow and where it is not level, other laws hold. Suppose that one intends (as we did now) to ascend a glacier of moderate slope bounded by snow slopes to either side. I believe that through fear of not ascending steeply enough, or through mistaking a moderate slope up for a level, or even downhill, course, one always tends to turn up the hillside nearest to one. Certainly I do ; whereas on the moor I do circle to the left. Well ; we wandered on, the snow getting deeper and deeper, until at last the vote of the majority decided that it was foolishness ; and we beat a retreat.

Valley routes took us next to Zermatt, and there too the weather remained bad.

On the way back from a round by Breuil—as we

approached the Furggenjoch, I noted an interesting halo-phenomenon. As we mounted towards the pass from the Italian side, the sun was in the front of us ; and there was round it one of those coloured halos, distant eighteen or twenty-two degrees from it spoken of on p. 81.

Under the sun was the horizontal ridge of the pass, cutting off from view the lower part of the celestial halo. And the slope of snow leading up was powdered with fine ice crystals.

It was very interesting to me to note that the celestial halo, ascribed to the presence of fine ice crystals in the air, was, where cut off, completed by reflection off the crystal-covered snow slope ; the arc seen *on* the snow, and the arc seen *in* the air, made together the perfect coloured circle.

After a successful climb up the Wellenkuppe we set off one day at 1.10 A.M. from the Riffelhaus for an ascent of the highest peak of Monte Rosa. [The illustration does not show our peak, but another summit of the same mountain.] This climb I have already described (p. 110), and I will now only relate enough of our expedition to show how cold it can be high up if a north wind be blowing, however powerfully the sun may be shining ; and certainly on this occasion we were under the full blaze of a July sun.

We reached the Sattel (14,000 feet) at about 8 A.M., in company with two other (guided) parties. We observed that these got a little way over the ridge, and sat down in the sun and in shelter from the wind until ' things ' up above should be warmer. As we were guideless, we were rather sensitive about incurring the reproach of following guided parties ; so we went on. Our way lay up steep snow, that was practically ice at the time, on which the sun did not fall ; and deadly cold it was ! The wind drove icy snow dust in our faces. It was my turn to lead, and so



THE EAST PEAK OF MOUNT ROSA



I had to do some step-cutting. Feeling my hold on my axe bad, I removed one glove, and soon got three fingers frost-bitten. The 'first aid' man of the party, Brant, soon (with snow) rubbed them back to life—and a most agonising consciousness of life it was; but even the hardy Cockin, who was as usual chief guide, advised a retreat.

So we came back to the shoulder; waited until the guided parties started, which they did when it was warm enough, and followed them. We all went on at about 10 A.M., leaving our sacks in shallow hollows excavated in the snow, and reached the top at about 12.45. When we regained our sacks at 2.15 P.M. we found Apollinaris water frozen, and wine partly frozen. And they had lain under a blazing sun!

Down below, out of the wind, we were simply roasted; such contrasts of climate are found on the high mountains. I had myself felt that our expedition was not quite a guideless one; but I was pleased to find that the chief man among the guides of the other parties did not crow over us at all because we had turned back and followed them.

Inferior guides are (or were?) as a rule jealous of all guideless climbing; but the better men have a very tolerant or even friendly attitude towards amateurs who have learned their business and 'paid their footing' in past and guided days. What all, quite rightly, object to, is that experienced amateurs should take up mountains inexperienced men with whom they have made acquaintance in the hotels, and who would otherwise have employed guides.

An attempt on the Dom, baffled by wind and snow and mist, brought our time at Zermatt to an end, and Corry now had to go home.

I have never felt the peace and beauty of Arolla more

strongly than I did when I saw it next. Cockin, Brant, and I left Zermatt for the Col d'Hérens route (more or less); and we must have suffered ptomaine poisoning at our last meal at Zermatt. We were hopelessly, almost agonisingly, ill all the way; and reached the Kurhaus quite exhausted.

This hotel is situated most picturesquely some way above the valley bottom where roars the stream, on a plateau among larches and Arolla pines.

Next morning when I awoke the trouble of the poisoning had passed away. Through the open window there breathed the pure air of the mountain pine-wood; above the sunlit trees the Pigne lifted its summit to the sky. Not a sound but the distant voice of the stream. No hotels, no clatter of mules, no smells of the crowded village. It was perfect.

Pleasant days followed; lunches on the summit of Rousette—no lofty peak, it is true, but you can see Mont Blanc afar; rock practice on the little Dent de Satarme; all with congenial companions.

Not long after Cockin and I went off together to climb the highest summit of the Dents des Bouquetins—last climbed by me in 1887. As 'local man' I pointed out the way; but Cockin was chief guide. He was a mountaineer of the older school; he never adopted knickerbockers, puttees, and other more modern mountain gear.

It was cold and there was deep snow, and I can see him now as he made his way on ahead of me; bearded, a rough woollen cap pulled down over his ears, clad in homespun coat and trousers, and wearing massive boots; a sturdy and reliable-looking leader.

We gained the top, thanks to his strength and skill, but found it too cold to stay long. It was in the descent, by



a fresh route over very steep hard snow in part, that I noticed, more than on any other occasion, his exceeding sureness of foot.

A round by the Pas de Chèvres, Chanrion, and the Otemma glacier, brought our stay at Arolla, and my vacation, to an end.

*Note on mud avalanches.*—The night before we left there had been a thunderstorm with very heavy rain. On our way to Evolène we came across two mud avalanches that had slid down from side gorges and crossed the road between Handères and Evolène. Over the first and smaller one planks had been laid; but, in order to cross the second, we had to follow it right down to the river, where its end had been washed away. There the sinking stream had left bare a strip of hard bed on which we could get round the end of our mud avalanche.

I have already spoken of another that I came across when returning from Tirol in 1892. And it has 'been borne in upon me' that one must not be hasty in labelling all ridges of earth and stones *moraines*, and in deducing the former existence of glaciers from their presence. In some cases, to postulate the former existence of glaciers, adequate to form such moraines, would be to postulate also vast changes in the configuration of the land, in order that there might be room for the snowfields that fed such glaciers. This is, I think, sometimes overlooked.

Some such ridges are due to mud avalanches; some are cut out in the talus of a gorge by the shifting paths of the torrent; some are due to debris from the cliffs sliding down the hillsides over the snow in spring, and such are not *moraines* even when this debris slides down against the side of a glacier and is stopped by it. For a *moraine*, by a definition which no one disputes, must be *debris that has travelled down on a glacier and has been deposited by it, or else is on the ice and still travelling*.

I always felt sure that the earth pillars of Euseigne, in the Val d'Hérens, had been carved out of water deposited silt, though one hears 'moraine' spoken of here also.

I confess that I was much pleased when I found my amateur guesses confirmed in the main by Professor Bonney when I met him in 1900 and 1909. He had thought and written about the matter long ago, I found.

April 1899 saw me at Lausanne bound for Les Avants ; once more an invalid through overwork, once more come to the mountains for help.

It was interesting to see how things were, so early. The Rochers de Naye railway was still snowed up. I walked along it, dived into the tunnel down a hole that had been cut in the snow, emerged through another snow shaft at the other end, and found myself in the (now) white crater of the Rochers. The caretaker of the hotel and his wife were glad to see any living being ; and they gave me good hot coffee and milk.

Later on I witnessed the extraordinary growth of the narcissus about Les Avants. It grew in great sheets ; the dark leaves, above which rose the star-like flowers, entirely hiding the grass. Later on they mowed them down with scythes so as to let the grass get the sun and air.

Later, again, I went to Kandersteg ; and it was while wandering there that I first began the collection of inscriptions, cut on the outsides of chalets, with which I went on in 1907-8, and of which I speak later (see Ch. xvii.).

On June 20, I met Cockin and Brant at Andermatt ; and next day we drove over to Dissentis.

More than once I find written in my diary : ' I like this East Switzerland ! ' And indeed all was singularly charming. The rivers were fine and the waters clear—like greenish salmon rivers, not the muddy glacier streams of the Rhone valley. And instead of the desolate slopes of the latter, we had mountain sides covered with fine trees and other vegetation ; instead of the too often dirty and ruinous buildings we found clean and solid houses (not unadorned with flowers) that suggested prosperity and cheerful lives, without striking the lower note of mere prettiness that so often jars on one in the Berner-Oberland.

Bad weather spoilt our plans of climbing, and we made for the Engadine by Thusis, the Via Mala, the Stallerberg pass, Stalla (or Bivio), and the Julier pass.

I remember the solidity and roominess of the buildings at Thusis, and the fine panelling of the *salle à manger* in the Bivio hotel.

In this panelling a very happy effect had been produced in the following way: A plank of suitable size (half the size of the panel desired) was so sawn as to make two planks of the same area, but about half the thickness. These were then placed side by side to form the panel in such a way that a pattern, symmetrical about the joining line, was formed by the curves in the grain and the knots sawn through; much like the 'blot figures' that children make on paper.

At last, on June 25, we reached Sils Maria (5930 feet above the sea), and put up at the *Hôtel Edelweiss*.

Of all places that I know, Sils Maria—unless it has changed—is the most perfect spot to make a long stay at, provided that one does not require to be within easy reach of many high climbs.

In the first place, one is at nearly 6000 feet above the sea; and not only that, but there is a singular freshness which I ascribe to the fact that the head of this Upper Engadine is not shut in by mountains; you walk up, almost on a level, to the Maloja pass, and find yourself looking over a steep fall into Italy. For the same reason, when bad weather comes, you are not, as you are at the head of other high valleys, involved in the sudden wintry weather that then wraps the snow mountains.

Then again there are such lovely walks. At Arolla and other high places you have (I must admit it) to make an

effort if you are to get exercise ; you must pound away up hill. But at Sils Maria you can walk, in delightful air, under fir-trees along the margin of the purest of mountain lakes—I fear that the St. Moritz lake can no longer be called pure,—or slant quietly up easy paths, or explore the Fedoz and Fex valleys. And the hotel was so clean and so quiet (we were there early in the season), the food so good, and the wine so excellent. I cannot imagine a better place to recruit in.

I pass over a walk up the Piz Corvatsch and other expeditions, and give but two typical days to represent our usual, somewhat unambitious, mountaineering.

Both were guideless rounds in unknown glacier regions, of the sort that have a great charm of their own. They have not the attraction of danger and the triumph of success as have the more adventurous mountain climbs ; but the pleasures of interpreting the maps, of negotiating crevasses, and interviewing snow slopes of suspicious character (an inclination to avalanching being the matter in question), and of the almost-despaired-of arrival at an inn before night falls ; such pleasures are, I think, more lasting. There is no reaction ; and no feeling that one must work oneself up again to a high pitch of enterprise before repeating them. They result in a greater knowledge of the mountain world, and so add to one's experience that one can hope to be able to take many of the younger generation on similar excursions so long as a fair amount of strength remains ;—long past the time at which strenuous climbs have become impossible.

On the first occasion we set off at 6.45 A.M. up the Val Fex, and halted for food at 9.45. We mounted the glacier by the tongue marked 2150 in the Siegfried map, and at 12.30 were on the Fuorcla Fex-Scerscen. We descended



THE UPPER ENGADINE FROM THE MUOTIAS MURADEL.



on the other side, and went along inspecting couloirs that led up to the heights, such as La Sella, that head the Roseg glacier. But, owing to the prevalence of huge icicles that threatened many ways up, we had to be content to use the lowest dip in the frontier arête, called the Fuorela Sella ; and then came down the middle of the Roseg glacier to the Roseg inn. We went in a leisurely way and halted whenever we felt inclined ; and so did not get to the inn until 9.45 P.M. And next day we returned to Sils Maria over the Fuorela Surlej.

Another day, soon afterwards, we set off at 6.50 A.M. up the Fedoz valley, and reached the glacier at 9.30.

After a halt of nearly an hour, for food, further on, we struck the ridge at the Fuorela Fedoz at 12.50. Then we climbed the Piz Fora, and had a rest at the top of nearly an hour. We then came all down the Fex glacier, and found the snow very avalanchy.

Now a free man, who starts at the top, can safely glissade down avalanchy snow ; for he only has to brake with his axe, and let the avalanche go on ahead. But we glissaded from the top *roped*. The slope was quite a short one, else we should not have done this. Nevertheless the result was, confusion ! We got regularly mixed up with the snow ; for the front men got snow from behind, while the last man was dragged down (by the rope) with irresistible force. It was but a short glissade ; but Cockin lost his hat and axe (the latter recovered later) ; Brant had a stout, felt-covered, ebonite flask stove in, and lost his spectacles ; while one of my legs had to be dug out, in a strained condition, from a big 'gathering as it rolls' snow-ball.

We got home about 7.30, and all felt that we had had a good day.

Then Mr. Newmarch came ; and we decided to attempt a more ambitious climb—the Disgrazia (12,065 feet).

On July 6, we set off in the afternoon for the Forno hut, heavily laden—wine, in glass bottles, was, I fear, the chief part of our burden as regards weight. At the hut we found a Russian with three guides, one of whom was Chr. Klucker ; I forget where they were going.

On such occasions I never can sleep ; fearing to oversleep, I keep waking and looking at my watch. We got up at 2 A.M., and found mist about and something like rain or snow falling. We set off at 3.45 A.M., and, passing by the Cima di Rosso, got on to an arête whence we looked down on the glacier of Sissone and the Malero (?) valley.

We had taken turns at leading ; and in one part our leader ascended an ice slope by means of a crust of snow that clung to it. I remember noticing this at the time, and thinking that it would not be so easy to descend if the sun got on this crust. But the only easier way was up furrowed snow to our left, and this was threatened by falls from an ice cliff above.

From this arête we saw that our route was evidently over the top of Monte Sissone ; so we climbed up to it. We were here 10,940 feet above sea-level. After a considerable loss of time due to mistakes in choosing our way down, we descended to the head of the Val di Mello—a tremendous waste of energy this seemed, since we reached a level of perhaps only seven thousand or eight thousand feet above the sea ; but I think it was unavoidable.

Even July 7 is very early in the season ; and these regions, all grass, rock, or stone in August, were knee-deep in soft snow.

Two Italian douaniers hailed us, and, of course, we waited for them. They looked like ordinary soldiers, and



were armed with carbines and revolvers. I understand that if one does not halt, they have the right to shoot—in fact *must* shoot. [The king's gamekeepers, we were told by the men themselves, are armed only with guns and buckshot ; but they too shoot if poachers will not stand. Both douaniers and keepers go about in pairs.]

The poor men had no sticks and no dark glasses ; and they came staggering through the deep snow, under sun enough to give much heat and glare, in a most uncomfortable fashion.

When they found that we were returning to the Swiss side again they did not examine our sacks. To our surprise they would accept no wine or food. I wondered whether the Italian Government pair together men from different districts, so that each is afraid of the other informing against him ?

We then went up on to a high ridge<sup>1</sup> looking down into the Sasso Bissolo valley on the other side, this valley joining the Val di Mello at the end of the ridge, the united valleys being then called the Val Masino, and descending to the Valtellina. I *think* it is in this Sasso Bissolo valley that the Cecilia hut is ; Klucker told us that we should have spent the night there after ascending the mountain. We followed this ridge (passing a rough stone shelter) up to the final arête.

Here Cockin and Brant, both having, I think, been up the mountain before, decided to stop ; while Newmarch and I went on.

Certainly one had to make up one's mind as to whether there was avalanche danger or not. I happened to be on ahead, and cut right down into the underlying snow on one very steep traverse, so that we went along quite a deeply sunk path. Of the view from the top, E. S.

<sup>1</sup> I had no map on this climb, and am not sure of our route.

Kennedy writes: 'We look down the deep valley of Chiaraggio beneath us; beyond is Monte Nero. Higher up in the background rises the Tremoggia; the whole surmounted by the grand range of the Bernina.' We had left the others at 1.45; and, owing to the work with this deep snow, we did not reach the top until 3.45; but we got back to the others at 4.45.

It was not until about 6 P.M. that we were at the foot of the steep slope leading up to Monte Sissone; and we waded, waist-deep in snow, up it. It was very tiring; for, over and over again, the leading foot would come down to the level of the other.

At 9 P.M. (!) we were on Monte Sissone in dark, mist, and wind.

The lantern blew out in the wind, unless partly muffled with a handkerchief; and then went out through suffocation if the wind struck it less strongly.

Cockin was always strong on tracks, and volunteered to guide us back by our morning's tracks. Here we had more luck than we deserved. The tracks up to the top on the Swiss side—I mean, on the slopes by which we had ascended Monte Sissone in the morning—were so slight that sun would have melted them away, and a very little new snow would have covered them; as a rule, there were a few nailprints, or the slight stab of the spike of an axe. But mist had protected them from the sun, and the snow had fallen rather further down the wind, on the lee side of the ridge.

At one place we tested our position by shouting and getting echoes from the Cima di Rosso.

Lower down we came to the part mentioned earlier, and found that the snow coating had gone; we had to descend ice on which there were no steps cut. And one lantern

did not suffice both for the front man to cut steps and for the others to follow. A slip or so, while yet two men were on the snow above, and could hold, warned us not to descend further, since soon we would be all at the same time on ice steps, and holding a slip would be impossible. So I suggested going back a little, and striking off to what was, in descent, our right, so as to try to gain those snow furrows spoken of already; it was true that they were sometimes swept by falling ice, but it seemed unlikely that any would fall at midnight. The others let me try. I was dismayed to see (apparently) crevasses ahead of me; but these proved to be no crevasses, but only the shadows thrown by the lantern in the hollows of the grooves. We got down safely, and then our pathfinder, Cockin, led again, and discovered our old tracks to the left on the level part below. We reached the Forno hut at 2.15 A.M.; we had been twenty-two and a half hours out! Soup and tea revived us, and we got to bed about 4 A.M. We had had a really 'weird' experience, mountaineering since 9 P.M. in the dark.

I note that in the course of this expedition we once saw our shadows in the fog, and each saw coloured halos round the shadow of his own head, which began at the head and were repeated. I should say that they extended to twenty degrees or so radius from the head, but the outer circles were white—or barely coloured.

So ended our one really big expedition.

On Monday, July 10, we transferred quarters to the Steinbock Hotel, Pontresina. It was there that I first came across that way of drying flowers (in wool, between wire frames?) in which they are not pressed, and preserve more of their natural colours.

On July 11, we slept at the Roseg inn, and next day

ascended the Piz Morteratsch (12,315 feet), a very easy mountain.

There ought to be a law against that dangerous practice of breaking bottles on the mountains. It is a wonder to me that one does not hear of frequent bad cuts due to this barbarous and careless habit. A lunch place of the Morteratsch is simply covered with broken glass.

We saw six chamois on the moraine below the cabane, and the tracks of one reached to the top of the mountain.

This expedition virtually closed my season.

I may perhaps be permitted to call attention to a peculiar danger of the early season.

Before the snow has settled down to its normal August condition, buried or partly buried rocks or boulders give rise to peculiar traps that are very dangerous in descent. As a rule, the snow on the up-hill side of these is pressed firmly against them, and you can walk from the snow on to the rock or on to the boss of snow that indicates their presence. But on the down-hill side there is nearly always a gap that in the early season is often concealed. Coming down hill, one's leg may get in, and, if the body (as is natural) falls forward, a severe strain or even a broken limb may result. At best, one's boot may get so wedged in that it has to be dug out with the axe. I have seen this happen to a mountaineer of great experience. If you can see where the rock is, you can get on to it safely from above, and then spring some yard or so on to the snow below it, thus clearing the gap. So again, if you are following a snow channel between rocks, traversing a slope horizontally or on a slant, you should keep well away from rocks that lie up the slope.

I never came across this danger until (for twelve years)

my vacations came between June 8 and July 20, or so, and then I found it a very real one.

On June 13, 1900, I joined Dr. Brushfield at Charing Cross. We had planned a campaign in the Graian Alps, and had engaged a guide of Bourg St. Pierre whom I believed to be good. He proved to be incapable and unenterprising; the poor man was soon afterwards in an asylum, and I suppose that his mind had already begun to lose its power. For this reason, and also because we went too early in the season, we accomplished very little.

Passing over the St. Bernard we descended to Aosta, and then made for the village of Dégioz in the Val Savaranche—our man called this village ‘Savaranche.’

In this valley, as in the Cogne valley, both of them French-speaking districts, we found the people honest, and the prices both fixed and moderate. Very different, as will be seen, was our experience when we crossed to Italian-speaking Ceresole.

Beyond walking up the Pta Bionla, and making a traverse of the Tout Blanc, we did no climbing. But some account of chamois and bouquetins, so numerous in this Royal preserve, may be of interest.

I learned that there were some sixteen *gardes-chasse* in this valley. They wear a uniform, with rain-cloaks to match, and go in pairs; they carry telescopes and shot guns, which latter they may use against poachers if these refuse to stand.

There were paths engineered in the hillside, and shelters (or shooting covers) for the Royal shooting; and both were being put into repair, as King Umberto was to come that September. Does my memory deceive me, or was he not murdered that summer before the shooting came on?

There were bouquetins and chamois in droves that ran up to two hundred or so ; the two races do not associate with one another.

The male and female chamois are much alike ; but the male bouquetin has huge thick and curved horns with *nœuds* all the way up, while the female has them much smaller.

The bouquetins (we saw lots) appeared to be of a dirty whitish colour, and to have long woolly hair ; they did not look at all fine in outline, yet our guide (a poacher) told us that they were better on rocks than chamois.

By the way, on this, as on other parts of the Swiss-Italian frontier, the Swiss poachers 'score.' For the shooting in Italy begins earlier than it does in Switzerland, and so the game is driven over, to some extent, to the Swiss side. So the Swiss poachers (who may be well-to-do amateurs) lie in wait and lay low many a chamois and bouquetin. I understand that the Swiss keepers—gendarmes told off for this duty—are few in numbers and easy to avoid.

We had inspected a little place Pont that lay higher up the valley, and had liked its look. So we moved up there soon. Scenery, hotel, people,—all was satisfactory at Pont ; only they had not yet their summer supplies of provisions.

From Pont we passed over the mountains to Ceresole, a beautiful Italian watering-place. Here, in this Italian-speaking place, we got shamefully overcharged at our inn ; and we were told afterwards, both by our guide and by an Italian gentleman, that Italian visitors would have bargained about each dish before it was prepared. After the honesty of the people in the Val Savaranche we were most unpleasantly surprised.

With the passage of the Col du Grand Etret to the Alpine hut called the Victor Emmanuel Rifugio, an ascent of the

Gran Paradiso (13,325 feet)—a fine mountain,—the passage of the north Col de l'Herbetet to Cogne, and a stay of a day or two at the friendly little inn there while I nursed a wrenched knee, our uneventful visit to the Graians came to an end. Partly owing to the earliness of the season, mainly to the lack of initiative on the part of our guide (no fault of his, poor fellow, as I have said), we had done very little. Some memories remain to me : the big herds of chamois and bouquetins, the beauty of the Val Savaranche and of the Cogne valley, the honesty and friendliness of the people. I remember too the enjoyable ascent of the Gran Paradiso, and the view from its summit ;—how fine the nearer mountains, such as the Herbetet and Gran S. Pietro, looked, the latter fringed with snow cornices, and how suggestive of height and grandeur the distant Mont Blanc group. The giants of the Pennine range were to be seen, as also the great Dauphiné group.

Longing for a more active time of climbing, we turned Arolla-wards, making for it by Aosta and the Valpelline ; by Bionaz, Prarayé, and the Col d'Oren. For me it was a journey on mule,<sup>1</sup> save where we could drive ; for my knee was bad. Starting at 5 A.M., it was 6.30 P.M. when we reached Bionaz in the Valpelline. We had heard of the curé there often, and now we saw him. He appeared at the door of his house in hunting dress, carrying a carbine. A small, vigorous, and very pleasant man ; well educated, mountaineer, sportsman (it was whispered, poacher and smuggler too !), botanist, doctor, carpenter, priest ; friendly to Englishmen. We had food there, and bought provisions. He was very simple about the money question.

We were beating about the bush, seeking how to put it delicately. '*Oh ! la note !*' said he ; and pencilled down

<sup>1</sup> But of course on foot after Prarayé.

the (very moderate) bill. We then went on to Prarayé, to sleep there for our passage next day of the Col d'Oren to Arolla. We had heard that we should find some shepherds there, and could get a fire, milk, and cheese.

The path on from Bionaz was *not* nice for a man on a mule, especially as the light faded. I noticed that in some parts the man leading the mule went on some distance ahead at the end of a long leading-rope, lest he should be overtaken, and pushed over the rocks into the torrent. The animal kicked more than once, and would have had me off but for my holding on to a rope tied to the saddle behind me. The mule man explained that, feeling unsafe in these places, he was trying to get rid of the extra load on his back !

We reached Prarayé in the dark ; twelve hours on a mule had been too much for me, and I was so stiff that I had to be lifted off.

Nevertheless, and in spite of the knee, we were off for the Col d'Oren next morning. This led us on to the familiar Otemma glacier, and we rejoiced to see again our old friends—the Evêque, Mont Collon, the Petit Mont Collon, the Pigne. Very delightful, too, was it to reach the Kurhaus at Arolla, and to find congenial English society, baths, and all the comforts that we had of late been without.

As I have related earlier (see p. 44), I had once made an attempt on Mont Blanc de Seilon (12,701 feet), and had been driven back. I now set off with our guide and Maurice Gaspoz of Evolène ; and we made for the Col de Serpentine, intending to traverse the mountain and descend to the Col de Seilon.

On the way from the former col to the final rocks up which you climb to the summit, there are two rock towers



that you have to circumvent ; and the presence of loose snow and ice made this rather troublesome. I did not yet know Maurice Gaspoz, and I watched him at work with an eye to the future. It will be seen later that he 'passed' with honours, in my judgment !

On the top we were in a thunderstorm, with hail and mist. Our heads prickled in quite a painful way through our knitted helmets ; and whenever it lightened we got a shock in our heads and over our faces. One discharge seemed very close. The guides said they felt confused in the heads ; but I think this was to some extent due to the nearly universal guides' fear of lightning. They wanted to leave the axes behind ! I remembered the usual ice slopes down to the Col de Seilon ; and, calling myself a 'Professor of Electricity' (quite true when said in French to Swiss), I asserted that our having axes made no odds. I don't believe it does ; and anyhow, I was not going to descend without axes. Fortunately the arête we had to follow (that towards Ruinette) was in an extraordinarily good condition. There was no cornice, and no ice ! Those who know Mont Blanc de Seilon will appreciate the significance of this. In the strong wind and drift, and with the occasional shocks, it was a great advantage to us that we could crouch down and creep safely along a pathway of snow on the ridge, instead of having to stand up on a steep slope of ice and cut steps—and that downward.

Lower down, near the col there was ice, and axes *were* needed ; I was able to draw a moral for the benefit of the guides ! Arolla was reached at 4 P.M.

Then came days of bad weather during which we did nothing much—save Roussette, a great resource in mist.

One day Brushfield and I went down to lunch at what was to me the 'new' inn at Haudères. After lunch we

fraternised with the landlord, and he had up a special bottle of his own prize 'Dôle de Sion' in our honour. I had detected that he was a German-speaking Swiss (towards whom my heart always warms when I meet them in French-speaking districts), and I had tried him with a German salutation.

He told us how he had come, thirty-eight years ago, from Bern as a butcher's lad to Sion, and had worked his way up gradually. He had married a native, and had taught her his Bernese German. They hoped to retire very soon and to live—at Haudères, of all places !

When I inquired after him a few years later, he was dead. Well ; he had had success and had been happy ; there had been no sinking into insignificance or weakness in old age. There are worse lots than that of dying in harness.

Not long after this I was left companionless, and took on Maurice Gaspoz for three climbs more, to be done when circumstances were favourable.

I like much these climbs with a guide alone, when he is as courteous and pleasant a companion as Maurice Gaspoz. We had much friendly talk together. But of course such a party has no reserve force ; neither must get injured.

Our first climb was the traverse of the arête of the Petite Dent de Veisevi, in which the actual climbing lasts only about two and a half hours.

I fear that my many visits to Arolla cause the same climbs to be spoken of more than once. But I will, at least, describe each mountain and climb in detail only once ; and now it is the turn of this favourite rock climb.

The range of the Grandes Dents that bounds the Arolla valley on the east, and that contains several peaks of about 12,000 feet, ends to the north in a somewhat lower

peak, the Grande Dent de Veisevi. North of this there is a fall to the pass called the Col de Zarmine, by which you can get over to Ferpècle in the other branch of the valley. From the col the arête rises again and turns westward, and near the end lies the highest point of this part of the ridge (only 10,463 feet above the sea, and 417 feet higher than the col), called the Petite Dent de Veisevi. The traverse from the col along the ridge, over the various summits, including this highest one, is called 'the traverse of the Petite Dent de Veisevi.' The rock is sound; and though one is sometimes in 'exposed' situations, there need be no risk with a properly constituted party. Indeed, I know of no better 'guideless' rock climb for not too ambitious amateurs. But a sad accident, in which four lives were lost, shows that the expedition is a serious one; for the leader was a sound and experienced man. Maurice and I started the climb from the Col de Zarmine, which we reached at 11.30.

After some scrambling along the arête we came to the huge tower, or pillar, called the *bâton*. This cannot be climbed on the side of the col. Here we passed to the right through a kind of tunnel, and, after a short climb up, found ourselves back on the ridge again on the other side of the *bâton* whose base we had rounded.

Though the *bâton* cannot be said to be included in the traverse, since you cannot go up it on one side and descend it on the other, nevertheless it is usual to climb it, since its ascent is rather sensational.

Up against it leans another mass of rock, big at the base and tapering to something of a point. This point is rather lower than the summit of the *bâton*, and stands away from it. You climb from the arête on to the base of the smaller mass, and scramble up to its summit. Then, standing

erect and poised in space on a pinnacle, you let yourself drop forward against the side of the *bâton* over the gap separating the two masses. A good grip for the left hand up above, a sort of general support for the right hand, and you hoist yourself up.

The descent is even more sensational; for you have to let yourself down into space, and to feel for the top of the smaller rock with your feet.

I will remark, however, that the 'grip for the left hand' is a good one, and makes the sensational bit *quite* safe; only you must not 'become a swindle' (German for 'get giddy'). For myself, it is the far less dangerous-seeming climb from the *arête* on to the base of the lower rock that I find the difficulty. Indeed, I here need a 'shoulder up,' and so I left out the *bâton* when I made the traverse once quite alone.

After this all was easy, though interesting, climbing along the *arête*, up and down, to the main summit. The descent from this on the other side is the best bit in the whole traverse—save perhaps the ascent of the *gendarme* described above.

We were off the rocks at 1.10 P.M., and reached Arolla at 4.50.

Our next climb was the complete traverse of all three summits of the Aiguilles Rouges, and we traversed from north to south.

I found that the north summit was a very mild affair; and we were soon at the gap between this and the central summit. If the reader will refer to p. 149 he will see that, in our guideless climb in 1897, my friends and I, coming from the south, did not descend to this gap from the top of the central peak, but turned down to the glacier much higher up. I now noticed that the descent to the gap

(whence the glacier is easily reached) would not have been a very easy matter, and would have taken us a long time. So I came to the conclusion that our route had not been a bad one at all.

With Maurice Gaspoz as guide all went off easily and relatively quickly; but the climb must always be a long one, and is full of interest all the way. Certainly it is second to no climb at Arolla.

My last expedition with my now well-tried companion and leader was up the face of the Aiguille de la Za. I have already described (see p. 35) to some extent how the Za looks from Arolla. Naturally the ambition of climbers would be excited, and they would wish to attack the mountains direct instead of meanly sneaking round at the back and taking it on its weak side.

But few care to risk the danger from falling stones that menaces one in these natural pathways, the snow couloirs. So the safe, though bold, plan is to go up the steep rocks that seem to fall sheer from the summit towards the valley and the hotel. I had already, in 1897, used one of these couloirs in a guideless ascent made with my two friends, and had seen the danger that is incurred.

It would be tedious to most were I to describe the climb in detail. One remembers a chimney in which it is difficult to stick (unless one is a guide and has the general power of adhesion, when there is nothing particular to lay hold of, that is characteristic of the race), and out of which it is only too easy to fall. One remembers too a most sensational kind of staircase on the face of a cliff—not really difficult—where one has to avoid blocks of stone that may come away in one's hands. And one remembers the summit, reached at last, and the view. *I* remember how pleasant it was, after our strenuous work, to come home

the usual and easy way ! But I think the man has yet to be found who wants to come *down* that face ; and when he is found, he had better be warned not to.

I trust that it is not a sign of a misanthropical disposition ; but I confess that I like solitary and unconventional approaches to and departures from the mountains. The arrival alone, over some snow-covered Gemmi, allows the peace of the hills to descend upon one as one comes straight from the worries and anxieties of one's work in England ; and a solitary departure over some pass permits the memories of the past summer to crystallise undisturbed.

This time I went off by the Col de Seilon and the Val de Bagnes, two friends accompanying me part of the way, and then watching me until they felt assured of my safe passage over the glacier. I descended to the valley, looked up at Giétroz's seracs crowning the cliffs, passed quaint little Mauvoisin,—and so, home.

## CHAPTER XII

‘These,’ he said slowly, ‘are indeed my hills. Thus should a man abide, perched above the world, separated from delights, considering vast matters.’—*Rudyard Kipling*.

BINN—ZERMATT—AROLLA—CHAMONIX, 1901

JUNE 14, 1901, found me at Fiesch in the afternoon ; and after some food at the Hôtel des Alpes (the landlady, Mrs. Feller, is sister to Frau Schmid-Kraig of Ernen and Binn) I set off on foot for Binn. Much of the way I walked with a youngish priest of decidedly superior stamp ; many are mere peasants. He had met, and greatly admired, Bishop King. Somehow, he had received the impression that the Church of England was very nearly, and would soon be quite, ‘Katolisch’ or Roman. And, taking it for granted that all English people were of the Church of England, he had become convinced that England would soon be of his own Church. In the course of our talk I was interested to note that, while he admitted errors of action on the part of Rome, he said that her *teaching* had always been the same. I received from him something of the impression received very strongly from a priest met at Davos, viz., that Rome trains her priests (if intellectually equal to it) in such a way that they are thoroughly up in the various heresies or objections to the dogmas of their Church, and in the answers to be made to them. I think that the ordinary English clergyman would show up very badly in an argument or debate held with a Roman priest of far smaller pretensions to general education and culture. Whether victory in a

debate is worth little or much, it would be out of place to discuss here.

I felt tired and 'cheap'; and so I determined on what has ever since been my infallible cure, viz., a round of passes.

I was lucky enough to find Schmid himself, the father, free enough from work and inclined to go. It was not a question of a guide, but of a cheery companion; and he certainly is most cheery, full of interesting information, and sympathetic. We went over the Krieg-alp pass to the 'little old inn at Devero,' whose praises I sung earlier; and there Schmid chatted in Piedmontese to the people, by the open Exmoor-like kitchen fire. It was all very simple and friendly.

Next day we went up the lovely valley, beautiful and musical with its two clear rushing streams, passed over the Scatta Minojo, and skirted the frozen Vanino lake. Then Schmid showed me the way (since followed by me alone or with a friend) over the Hahnenjoch and along the hillside until we could descend on Tosa. Here we were 'first swallows,' and very welcome; I think that Father Schmid is welcome everywhere.

Next day we set off for Binn by the Hohsand glacier. The gorge of the stream being full of snow, we actually went up this instead of mounting high up on to the side of the valley. I wonder how many travellers beside myself have passed up this impressive cañon? In the usual season it is of course impossible. All being easy going, we ascended the Ofenhorn, and thence descended over snow with big glissades, to the Albrun route, and reached Binn at 12.15 P.M., nine hours after our start.

This round of three days removed all tiredness and sickness, and I was set up for the summer. En route Schmid told me many things.



One was the story of the *Mazze*.

In old days, when the people were oppressed by robber barons (or the like), they sometimes turned on them desperately. They met, and one carried a head, carved in wood and painted, of sorrowful aspect. [A carved and painted wooden head can easily look depressed.]

It was questioned: 'What ails thee, Mazze? Does any oppress thee? Is it such-an-one?' If the name were wrong, the head was shaken.

When the right name was suggested, the head was nodded. 'Then I will aid thee, Mazze,' said one and another; and each drove a nail into the head to make it feel sure of help (!).

When it had gone round, the sworn ones made for the castle of the culpable baron (or knight) and demolished it; demolished the baron too.

If that is not right, I ask my readers to notice that I write Recollections, not history; and those *are* my recollections of Father Schmid's story.<sup>1</sup> He told me too of the former relatively great fertility of the higher pastures. How much is true I don't know; nor whether the falling off has been due to climate. If the change has come within modern times, I myself would just suggest the neglect of irrigation as a possible cause. There seem to be old irrigation channels in many parts that no longer carry water. And if once the herbage fails, the rain and water from

<sup>1</sup> Since writing the above I have come across a reference to this story in M'Crackan's *The Rise of the Swiss Republic* (Henry Holt and Co., New York, 1908). I extract the following; it refers to a date a few years after 1403:— 'The Lords of Rarogne . . . abused their power and influence to such an extent that the people of the Valais were constrained once more to take up arms in self-defence. On this occasion the patriots brought into play an old custom, which consisted in carrying from village to village a wooden club as a symbol of revolt. This *Mazze*, as it was called, from the Italian *Mazza*, a club, had carved upon it a human face in agony, to express violated justice, and was deposited before the residence of the Lord of Rarogne.' I think that Father Schmid's account was more vivid.

melting snow will soon denude the slopes of soil, as is notoriously the case where forests are destroyed. He told me that old records of confirmations, or first sacrament, point to a much larger population up the higher valleys.

Also—there were once three sisters who inherited land ; the portion of one was up on the *Albrun* route (the *Ochsenfeld*), and she clapped her hands for joy ; that of the second was by Binn, and she was neither glad nor sorry ; that of the third was by Ernen, and she wept. The moral is that in those days the higher regions of the Binnenthal were the best, the middle parts next best, and the lower parts (Ernen is really outside the valley, on the side of the Rhone valley) the worst ; an inversion of the state of things of to-day.

I remember also that, on our way, we met Italian peasants smuggling salt and other necessities of life over the frontier. This is a common sight in out-of-the-way parts ; and the men often take very dangerous routes in order to avoid the Italian douaniers. Father Schmid is a very law-abiding Swiss citizen ; but he told me that he thought no ill of these people for smuggling ; they did it for their families, not for direct profit, being ground to the earth by taxes.

Later on I met the two Alois Pollingers, father and son, whom I had engaged, at Randa. Our first climb was to be up the Weisshorn (14,803 feet, a giant). So we went to the hut to sleep. It was small, but a comfortable and warm place of the newer model ; and the night was not like that spent in the open, under a waterfall, when I was last attempting the mountain. [See p. 143.]

Ours would be the first ascent of the year, and there had been all sorts of depressing conjectures (on the part

of other guides) as to 'snow cornices,' etc.; but all went well. We left the hut at 1.40 A.M., and reached the top at 9.35 A.M.

It is a grand mountain, the Weisshorn; and the long climb up the arête gives you a magnificent view all the time—that is a great feature of the ascent. Of the summit itself, Leslie Stephen writes with admiration, pointing out how sharp and true it is, in spite of the magnificent bulk of the mountain, three finely cut arêtes meet at a vertex, and the three faces of the solid angle formed correspond to the three sides of the mountain. I must confess that, attractive as guideless climbing is, I do thoroughly enjoy the complete *rest* of being with good guides. And one can still climb; one need not become a portmanteau.

A traverse of the Rothhorn finished my climbing with these men; for bad weather came on, and they were due to fulfil another engagement soon. A very pleasant feature in the climb had been the appreciative way in which Pollinger (senior) had noticed any precautions that I took for the general safety, as hitching the rope when traversing; '*Ganz richtig! Wie einer Führer, Herr Larden,*' or something like that, he would say with a friendly grin. [In German, my precautions went, I think, by the simple name of *Sicherheitsvorsichtsmassregeln*, or else *Führerartigsicherheitsvorsichtsmassregeln*, if their professional nature were to be specially pointed out.] I felt that we were three companions, not two guides and a bale of goods 'to be safely delivered at Zinal.'

That Rothhorn traverse is delightful. Years are creeping on apace; but I still (secretly) entertain a hope that before I am told to retire I may yet do this climb guideless, and once more (also guideless) cross the Col d'Argentière. Both expeditions have a singular fascination for me.

From the Rothhorn we descended to the Mountet hut ; and two days later I was at Evolène alone, on my way to Arolla.

Here, at Evolène, I chanced to witness two weddings ; and the beauty of the commune was there. I was struck more than ever with the contrast between the overworked and poorly fed mountain girls, and those who do comparatively light work in hotels and live well on ' *table d'hôte* ' food. Here were the flower of the former class, as their faces showed ; but all were high-shouldered, as flat-chested as boys, and awkward in movement. If you want to know how injuriously hard the mountain life is, do not look at the young men in Sunday dress clustered round the church porch, but at the women of twenty-five or thirty ; and even more perhaps at the stupefied, dirty, red-eyed spectres of old or elderly people whom you can find left in the chalets of the mountain side while the workers are afield. This last is a tragic sight. There is nothing that I have seen in English agricultural life to approach the hardships so patiently borne by the mountain Swiss. [I do not, of course, speak of destitution, but of the life under normal conditions.] Here and there, as in Wolff's *Geschichten aus Tirol*, one gets a picture of the life of the poorer peasants drawn by a native artist. Romance ! Have you seen women staggering up the steep slopes with loads of liquid manure carried in huge vessels on their backs—loads that few of us would care to carry twenty yards—and tipping the filthy stuff over their shoulders to fertilise the pasture for next summer ?

At Arolla there were the usual pleasant expeditions with others, and I managed to put in a very educational solitary traverse of the Petite Dent de Veisevi arête—the *bâton* omitted. Then Dr. Hepburn and I arranged with two

guides, whom I will call A and B, to pass to Bourg St. Pierre by the usual high-level route, climbing the Grand Combin on the way ; thence to get round to the Italian side of Mont Blanc, and pass over this mountain to Chamonix.

The first day we set off at 1.45 A.M., crossed the Col de Seilon, and reached Mauvoisin in the Val de Bagnes soon after 9 A.M.

In the afternoon Hepburn and I went on ahead and found our way to the Panossière hut (see p. 151), where we were to sleep.

The two guides arrived much later, and A was sick and sad. He had heart complaint, consumption, and some serious complaint in the 'lower chest' (to put it in the delicate manner of a friend of mine). Luckily Hepburn was a doctor, and the man proved to be merely 'pumped' after his first day out. He had been carving all the winter ; indoor work in (probably) bad air.

We set off at 3.15 A.M. next day, and it was soon evident that up on the Combin the snow would have done all the better for two more days to settle down in.

Some still more unwise people had been up the day before when the air was less cold. On the corridor one read their escape. Their up-tracks were buried under an enormous ice avalanche that had come from the ice cliffs above, had swept across the corridor, and fallen over the cliffs below ; and their down-tracks came stumblingly back over the debris. It was as though death had blindly sprung at them and missed them ; hearing them pass but not seeing them. We had a successful climb, and reached Bourg St. Pierre in good time.

In the evening, the guide A said that he was exhausted and must return to Evolène ; and B absolutely refused to traverse Mont Blanc with us alone, even if we took a porter

from Courmayeur up to the Cabane du Dôme (see p. 134). So a change of plans had to be made.

After dinner, when he was in better spirits, I persuaded him to try the Col d'Argentière, undertaking to point out the way, since I had been there before.

As we drove up the Val Ferret next day we came in sight of the pass; and B sank into a gloomy and mistrustful silence. (See illustration, p. 262.) Certainly the appearance of this side of the col *was* misleading; it looked terribly steep. But I was myself quite satisfied about it, for I recognised the whole route which I had noted carefully in 1897. There was the Glacier de la Neuvaz, up the centre of which we had gone; and the smooth rocks at the top of it. There was the great buttress, descending from the col, round whose base we had gone in order to gain its summit-ridge by ascending snow slopes to one side. There was the said ridge (and I knew that it was *not* steep, as it seemed to be) by which the col was gained. And on the other side, invisible to us, I could trust that we should find the snow slopes of the Glacier d'Argentière coming up to the col itself to afford us an easy way down.

But B, a good guide in his own district and, I believe, in others that he knew, was not happy at being more or less in the hands of amateurs.

At my suggestion—I cannot help being somewhat egoistical! the whole point of the expedition lies in the fact that only I knew the col—he explored that evening the desolate waste of stones, streams, and scrub that lay between the valley and the glacier for which we should aim. Such a region, more than any other, baffles amateur guiding when, at the early start, the lantern throws uncertain light and deep shadows over the chaotic terrain.

Well; we set off at 1.30 next morning from the Chalet

Vernay where we had slept, and B found a way through the tangle of streams and brushwood. But after that he was always doubting. 'How can we get up that ice?' I replied: 'By cutting some five steps if we can also use the *rochers moutonnés*, or some thirty steps if we have to go up by ice alone.' We did use the smooth rocks, and cut about six steps.

Then, 'How can we get up that rock buttress?'

'We go round it to the right, and at this early season we shall find snow that we can walk up.'

So it turned out. Yet even when we were actually on the arête, whose end is this buttress, and clearly safe from all stones and with an obvious route to the top,—not even then did he cheer up. Nor did an empty sardine tin encountered higher up give him full confidence that we were not astray.

It is really remarkable how free from serious difficulty this lofty and picturesque col is.

As we neared the top, B mistrusted what might be the other side. I told him that we should descend the summit arête a bit and walk off on to snow that would lead us right down to the Chalet Lorgnon; but still he doubted!

When we did reach the top, when the easy snow slopes (it was July 11, and there was no ice) came up to meet us, when the magnificent view burst upon us, he was quite intoxicated with joy! It was the grandest col he had ever seen; the most splendid day out he had ever had! All his doubts were at an end, and with them passed away the only shadow that had lain on our enjoyment.

It is a splendid place! Behind you, on either side, fall the huge furrowed cliffs to the Neuvaz glacier. To one side runs the picturesque arête of the Aiguilles Rouges du Dolent to the somewhat distant and decidedly formidable-looking

Mont Dolent, with its steep slopes of snow and ice. To the other the ridge mounts to the grand summit nearer to us, called the Tour Noir, a pure rock peak. Before you, you see the fine Glacier d'Argentière by which you are to descend ; and hemming it in are the huge rock chains crowned with summits of the almost startling boldness that to my mind characterises this great mountain group.

All went well, and we soon got to the Chalet Lorgnon low down on the Argentière glacier. Hepburn had to leave me here, as he was due back at Arolla ; and the guide deserted me at Montanvert—he longed for more familiar haunts.

I had set my heart on climbing the Aiguille Verte (13,541 feet), and on mastering the Petit Dru at last. So I consulted the landlord, M. Alfred Simond, and he procured me a first-rate man, Alphonse Simond, and a young porter who—well, in algebraic language, he proved to be ‘ of negative value ’ ; for he was a serious source of danger.

In the illustration facing p. 136 the reader can see this grand summit topping the whole mass. But our route lies quite out of sight behind the great rock arête to the right in the middle distance. Our great couloir is here invisible.

We set off at about 4 P.M., and reached the Couvercle (is there a cabane up there now ?) in some two and a half hours. We had soup and tea, and were then supposed to sleep ; we had sleeping bags. I watched the stars ; it was grand. At 10.30 P.M. we got up, and set off at 11.30 P.M. It was a new experience, climbing over the *bergschrund* in the dark ; Alphonse cutting steps as he held the lantern in his teeth.

Practically the whole climb was up snow (some of it too hard to hold to with the axe), and steps were needed all the way. The whole couloir is a rubbish shoot, and the climb



—I had not known it—quite unjustifiable. We crossed and re-crossed icy troughs worn by falling stones ; but nowhere is there any security from stones save such as is given by climbing, as far as possible, in the night. The porter early distinguished himself by dropping and losing his axe ; so he felt insecure.

Luckily we were much helped by finding old steps that only needed improving ; I don't see how we could have got up without, as the work of cutting would have been too heavy and would have taken so long that we should have descended when stones were falling in such numbers that we must have been hit. Anyhow, no one ought to climb the Aiguille Verte by this couloir, unless there be conditions of snow which both bind the loose stones above, and also make the couloir easy to walk up without being avalanchy. I don't think that such conditions could obtain.

We gained the arête, and, ascending it, soon reached the summit (6.5 A.M.). I did not enjoy the prospect of the descent, and this disturbed the pleasure that the magnificent view would naturally have given me. As far as I remember, though steps were needed everywhere, we could, as a rule, hold on with the axe ; but, looking down between my legs, I was all the time full of anxiety on account of the extremely unsafe appearance of our axeless porter. He was indeed a great worry ! Once he was going to *jump* from one ice step to another, and I had to forbid him and to lend him my axe. Twice he slipped, and would have brought us all down had not I anticipated his mishap and asked Alphonse to hold me ; for I was not strong enough to withstand a tug that meant little to a man like Alphonse Simond.

Meanwhile stones, skirmishers of the armies that would descend later, bounded carelessly down, disregarding the

channels made for them. However, all went off without mishap ; and we reached Montanvert at 12.30 P.M.

I had, as said already, set my heart on doing the Petit Dru at last. Neither Alphonse Simond nor I wanted that porter again ; and the tariff for guides is *very* high, since this is one of the most difficult climbs of the district. Whether I was justified in doing so or not (I will not attempt to defend myself), I accepted Alphonse Simond's offer to take me up alone.

I will not again describe the mountain or the climb (see p. 136). I will only mention the more prominent features of this third attempt.

It turned out that the dangerous part of the climb, this time, was the crossing of the Glacier de Charpoua ! It was in a very bad condition ; there were huge, overhung crevasses, and the snow was very rotten ; not at all a glacier for a party of two men. When we returned over it, Alphonse let me go on ahead as a feeler, since he could have plucked me back where I could not have held him ; he was very strong, and alert too. The first place of interest was the overhung chimney spoken of before. Here my guide got up without apparent difficulty ; but I could not get over the projecting rock at the top without a good pull on the rope. Then came the terrace, near the top, where we had so nearly come to grief in 1897, and again we found the fixed rope blown up out of reach. The memory of what had happened there then, the sudden averting of disaster due to the prompt snatch at the rope made by our young guide, and to his wonderful strength of grip, all came back to me ; and I must confess that I did not look at my guide now as he did the delicate piece of traversing work spoken of before. I heard the nails of his boots scraping the rocks, I was aware of pauses to recover breath, and at last came

the welcome word that he was safe on the upper ledge. This piece I could not even attempt ; for it ran obliquely, and there was no guide behind to prevent me from a long swing and possible injuries were I to slip. So I went straight up from the narrow end of the ledge, relying entirely on the fixed rope which my guide now let down, and on his pull on my rope. A few minutes more, and we were at the top !

It was a wonderful place ! Looking down at minute Montanvert far below I saw a dazzle of pure light. Some one was flashing to us with a mirror. I flashed back with the top of a tin. How easily the signals passed from here to there ; what strenuous labour still awaited our heavy bodies before we could bridge the gap !

The descent, helped by the use of the doubled rope, went well, and I thoroughly enjoyed it. It is, however, trying for one's clothes. For, once on the rope, you often have to give up all attempts to climb, and do a lot of sliding.

Now the rock is of the granite order, and my clothes were of loosely made (*yellowish*) Harris tweed. So I reached the hotel much frayed and torn ; especially there was lacking a most essential part of my knickers.

All my luggage had long since (from Arolla) gone to Lausanne ; so I was in a fix.

I consulted the chambermaid. She had *green* Tirolese cloth only. '*Impossible, Monsieur !*' I explained. At last light dawned on her, and she cried——. But can I say it ? Every one is shocked, and yet every one laughs over it when they hear it privately. So I will venture. '*Ah ! je comprends, Monsieur ! C'est seulement pour cacher la chemise !*' Yes ; that was my sole, my modest, aim.

Well ; the little Dru was conquered at last ! But as far as I am concerned, I admit that I needed a guide not only

to reduce the labour, but absolutely ; for there were two bits that I simply could not do. It is a cragclimber's mountain of the best sort ; you have not to invent difficulties on it. But it needs good men and strong.

And so, good-bye to the mountains for one more year !

## CHAPTER XIII

If thou art worn and hard beset  
With sorrows thou wouldst fain forget,  
If thou wouldst learn a lesson that will keep  
Thy heart from fainting and thy soul from sleep,  
Go to the hills.

*Henry Wadsworth Longfellow.*

FIESCH AND BINN—AROLLA—RHONE-GLACIER GROUP—  
TITLIS GROUP—BINN AGAIN, 1902

IN 1902 I found myself once more invalided to Switzerland ; and this time I reached the Rhone valley in the latter part of May.

I found the Rhone a clear green stream—(I wonder how many visitors to Switzerland know that the turbid river familiar to them runs clear for some seven months in the year ?) ; and an Englishman who carried fishing-gear told me that he caught trout in it.

It was too early for most places, so I settled down at Fiesch for a time.

One of my first walks was to Binn. That is an avalanche-swept path in Spring ! I remember crossing one mass of avalanche debris on steps cut in the hard snow ; a tunnel had been dug through another ; while a third avalanche had swept down to the stream and then leapt back again further on, so that you first crossed trees broken down streamwards, and then others lying with their heads up the hill.

On the other side of the Rhone valley I found Herr Cathrein (junior) high up at the Eggishorn hotel, superin-

tending workmen who were struggling with snow some twenty feet deep. An avalanche, the snow having refused to be retained by the avalanche walls that are built on the hillside above, had carried off the English church and damaged the back of the hotel.

The Eggishorn mountain, which I went up, was quite a serious climb ; and had to be mounted by an arête. As I returned from the top I sent a little snow down over the slopes across which the (buried) path ran. The small masses grew into moving sheets, and then into a tumbling torrent ; and soon there was a huge avalanche that voiced its power far below.

It was at Fiesch that I first shot with a Swiss village rifle club. My experience of these is limited to a few in mountain valleys ; but the little that I learned may be of interest. Of course all that follows does not apply to every such club.

1. Every one either has his ' active service ' rifle of the latest pattern, or can buy one of the latest-but-one pattern (also very effective) for some very small sum, six francs, I was told. [You find chamois hunters or marmot shooters armed with these latter if they are not rich enough to get some lighter form.]

2. Cartridges can be bought for as little as thirty centimes per packet of ten. So twenty shots costs a man about sixpence, while with us they would cost 1s. 8d. or so. Moreover we cannot buy rifles for 4s. 9d.

3. The range in these mountain valleys usually runs from one hundred and fifty to three hundred metres, and I should say that the practice of these clubs is generally—' short ranges in a standing position.' The Swiss seem to me to be very good at this.

4. Their rifles have no sliding back-sight. If the wind be strong, you must aim to one side.

5. There seem to be few precautions. Here, at Fiesch, we fired from a covered shelter (a room, in fact) at a target that stood on the meadow to one side of an inhabited house. In the course of the shooting I saw this house continually covered by rifles set at a hair-trigger ! And both at Fiesch and elsewhere there was no drawing of bolts when the markers came out. In fact, I once saw a lad fire at one target while three men stood at the next close by. The light was bad, and he had not noticed them.

6. In well-organised clubs there are many sorts of targets and ways of scoring ; and some of these involve an element of luck that encourages a poor shot to try. I may say that every one *hopes* to cover his expenses, or even to gain. Now, in ordinary scoring (bull, inner, magpie, etc.—or the equivalent) the poorer shots must lose. But if, to take an example, the prize falls to the man who is nearest to the actual centre in five shots, then the man who hits the bull but once *may* beat the man who gets four or five bulls.

I was much struck with the good organisation of all these matters when I shot once at Kandersteg. At Fiesch, things were more elementary.

7. I came across a curious theory both at Fiesch, and also at Binn ; I don't know whether it is common. At Fiesch we fired over a stream (not a big one) at one hundred and fifty metres, and they called it two hundred metres 'because it was over running water.'

So when some men were doing military practice under *official* supervision near Binn, the range of three hundred or three hundred and fifty metres was called 'four hundred metres,' because we fired over the Binn stream. They said something about the 'water drawing the bullets down' ;

but, however refraction due to colder air might affect the sighting, it seemed strange that the officially reported range should be reduced ; for the target will practically subtend the same angle, stream or no stream. It was, by the way, characteristic of Switzerland that I was allowed to join in with this latter shooting ; there was no red-tape here.

On June 12, Binn was opened, and I moved there ; and many were my solitary wanderings. I went up Cherbadung, the Helsenhorn, the Hüllehorn, and other, minor, peaks.

Once more I went the beautiful Devero-Tosa round ; and still could sleep at the little old inn at Devero, though a terraplane and piles of stones threatened the coming erection of the new hotel. A solitary traverse of the Ofenhorn gave a delightful finish to the round. How wonderful the solitary heights are in June !

I do not know any more perfect rest cure than a round of the smaller passes taken alone early in the season. Even at the inns all is quiet ; and, once in the white world above the valley, you are in complete solitude. Here you may see the gaunt marmots issuing from their winter quarters to fatten themselves up against their next hibernating season ; there, a raven ; perhaps a fox, or the rare eagle. And it is a great delight to gain some height such as the Ofenhorn ; sit for a peaceful hour with the world and its cares below you, and then descend, in easy glissades over the snow covered slopes, home.

July 8 found me back at Arolla, and before long I arranged with Dr. Hepburn and his friend, Dr. Cockburn, to attempt a guideless traverse of Mont Blanc de Seilon. They were confiding enough to trust to my local knowledge ; and



so, on July 12, we set off at 2.30 A.M. and made for the Col de Serpentine first. We went slowly, as usually guideless parties do. For a guide will cut fewer steps, feeling sure of holding if the man behind him slips ; and, again, you need not as a rule wait for, or 'nurse,' a guide. There are many parts where three amateurs move as three separate men, while a Herr and two guides move as one and take a third of the time. So it was late, 2 P.M., when we reached the top.

We had seen that there was a big cornice hanging over the Glacier de Breney, on the arête by which we had to pass to the Col du Seilon. So I went well down (as I thought) on the other side, perhaps some fourteen feet from the top, before cutting steps. It was all ice. So there we were, in a line covering some sixty feet (since we had the rope designedly long) ; to our left rose the ice slope to the crest of the cornice, cutting off the view ; to our right it fell steeply toward the Seilon glacier ; and I was working away slowly, by no means in the effective style of guides, at cutting steps on a slanting course downward. Suddenly, with no louder sound than a rustle, some eighty or one hundred feet of cornice parted, and I found myself in full view of all the mountains to the left, and looking down past my foot on (a tributary of) the Glacier de Breney. It was a startling change, all the more because so silently brought about.

Again there held good what I had noticed before about the effect of accidents on amateurs, viz., that they are already so wrought up and tense that they cannot receive shocks (see pp. 69, 157). I realised at once our narrow escape, and, looking round, said : 'I'm awfully sorry, you fellows, to have miscalculated ; I thought I was cutting low enough down, but I see I wasn't. However, it just

didn't carry off our steps.' Hepburn, not in the least disturbed, steadied himself with his axe against the broken edge, and looked round ; then he remarked that some of our steps, where the last man had been half a minute before, *had* been carried off. Cockburn enjoyed the incident, I believe, as 'stimulating.' In the long-run I should say that I was the only one whom it affected ; I dreamed of it, and awoke with a shock, at intervals for years after, as I did after the Blaitière and Dru accidents. It *was* a narrow escape ; we were on ice steps on a hard slope, and if one man had been carried off, or had staggered and slipped through being startled, we should have been done for.

It was the first mistake I had ever made on snow and ice, and it worried me much. But I was comforted when Alexander Burgener, to whom I related the incident some few days later, told me not to blame myself at all ; that he and other first-rate guides had got wrong about cornices, and that the only thing was to avoid them, even by beating a retreat. As I had never employed Alexander, and as a guide would hardly go out of his way to reassure a guideless climber that he was not to blame, this did restore my spirits a good deal. It was very nice of him to take the trouble to reassure me. Well ; we found we were still on an overhang, so I cut downward and went on. But the work seemed endless and my hands got raw ; it was ice all the way down, that began to be clear. So at 5 P.M. we turned, and reached the top once more at 6 P.M.

On the way down I saw my view of the cause of the 'after-glow,' or 'Alpenglügen,' given in *Alpina* of about May 1897, confirmed. The expression is applied, *not* to the lighting up of the snow peaks by sunset, but to a rosy glow that comes on after sunset and after an interval of colder illumination.

First we saw the snows lit by the setting sun ; then this sank below the horizon and the light passed. The peaks were then lighted partly by some glowing crimson clouds in the west, but mainly by the blue and green-blue of the still-bright sky ; and they took on a cold, greenish white colour. Little by little, as the rest of the sky darkened, the crimson rim in the west became more and more the sole source of light ; and at last the snow glowed with a rosy hue, the true 'after-glow.'

I may add that if there be no crimson rim in the west, the 'after-glow' is of a greenish white due to the colour of the sky in the west ; and that the apparent increase in brilliance in both cases is an illusion, the same as that which makes the moon appear to shine more brightly after dusk than it does before sunset.

We went up the Pas de Chèvres in the dark, and lighted lanterns at the top. As we descended the trough-like valley towards Arolla, we seemed to see before us a pine-tree with a man standing under it. This turned out to be the peak called La Maja, across the valley and far away ; so deceptive are things at night.

We got in at midnight, just in time to stop a rescue party. Some guides knew how bad the cornice was (no one had been up that year), and feared we had come to grief.

I for my part felt that an interlude of passes would be a relief after this experience ; and the others, who enjoyed anything so long as it was high up, fell in with my wishes. So, as I knew the passes well by now, we made a round.

First the Cols Bertol and d'Hérens to Zermatt ; then the Adler and Egginerjoch to Saas Fee ; then the Alphubel back to Zermatt ; and finally the Cols de Valpelline and Mont Brûlé to Arolla. It was a delightful round, and we

took seven days over it ; but it would be tedious to describe it all.

At Saas Fee I found changes. Clara Imseng, who used to be at the restaurant on the moraine, and her brother-in-law, Augustin Supersaxo, who used to keep a bazaar, appeared to be owners of the Hôtel du Glacier, one of the new hotels. Clara looked very flourishing ; and there was a 'Restaurant Clara' (in memory of old days ?) at the basement of the hotel, so that the tradition of 'Clara's Restaurant,' so familiar to us of 1886, still went on. The hotel was good, and I settled in my mind to go there if I ever visited Saas Fee again. But I never have stayed there since 1889.

Our passage of the Alphubeljoch was interesting. It so happened that only I knew these passes ; and as regards this one, I had but once passed it, and that in the reverse direction and in a mist. But I had taken some pains to mark in my map what I believed to be our course.

We had tracks at first ; but these got fainter, and we reached the top in a mist and in wind that was rapidly obliterating with drift snow the slight trail left. Now the crevasses on the Saas side are not nice in a mist ; and so we had to make up our minds whether we should return at once while some tracks remained, or burn our ships and plunge into the blank whiteness beyond. We decided to go on. So we got into a line in the direction given by the trace on my map, and the last man kept me straight by the compass. My map indicated rocks to our right rather further on ; so we halted about there and shouted, and were given confidence when the quick-retuned echo revealed the shrouded rocks.

Lower down, luckily, we got out of the mist ; and so could see our way to the left between crevasses to the

rocks from which one descends on to a lower part of the Wand-gletscher. From the foot of these rocks it is all easy walking.

At Zermatt, the head-waiter, a friendly soul whose face was very familiar to climbers, and reputed to be himself a wealthy man, lamented to me the change in Zermatt produced by the railway. Even the Monte Rosa hotel, he said, hardly saw any of the genuine climbers of old days ; all were tourists or 'portmanteau-climbers' (visitors just lugged up mountains). I wonder if he has continued to go there in summer ? He really liked to see climbing men, and was not at all of the race that seeks tips ; much above that level. Comparatively few know the charms of such guideless wandering as this of ours. You enter the upper world as those who have won the right to do so ; there is delight in the scenery, and a quiet pleasure in the exercise of your craft (the same sort that, I have found, makes the use of a light sculling boat in rough tidal waters a form of exercise of which one never tires), and you descend to the valleys healthier, of better appetite, sleeping better, and more hopeful. The great mistake that many make lies in thinking that their mountain life in the summer should consist of a series of big efforts, with periods of inaction between, and of nothing else.

I will pass over the rest of our doings at Arolla—guideless traverses of the Petite Dent de Veisevi and of Mont Collon, and a repetition of the pleasant glacier-round by Chanrion made in 1898 with Cockin—and will only pause to mention an instructive incident that occurred on the high glacier that lies to the east of the north Col de Bertol.

One day Cockburn and I took Miss G. Cockburn up the Za by the usual route, but starting from the Bertol hut. Another party of amateurs, two men with a lady between

them, followed us to the Za. On the way back, I warned the leader of these that the crevasses would now require care, as the snow had softened. Apparently he did not sound, and moreover he carried his rope over his shoulder—a queer device copied from some guide somewhere. The result was curious. Looking up soon after, I saw two men and no lady, and the leading man was lying down. The lady, not being warned or watched in passing one of the weakened bridges, had gone down into a crevasse; and the tug, taking the leader up by the neck, had pulled him over—naturally. Had *he* broken in, it would probably have been uncomfortable for him, as the rope went in a very strange way about him. Of course the lady was pulled up again; but the surprise and shock were rather hard lines on her.

Leaving Arolla somewhat later, I went to join Mr. Legh Powell, who wished to explore passes in the Rhone-glacier and Titlis groups, with a view to helping Mr. Valentine Richards, who was editing the second volume of *Ball's Guide*—the Alpine Club's memorial to its first President, the pioneer John Ball.

It was for me an introduction, not only to a new and congenial mountain companion, but also to a new department of mountaineering, viz., the finding out and description of passes in out-of-the-way parts. For men of but moderate strength the smaller groups are the more suitable when the work is of this kind; for, since huts must be used (sometimes one after another), heavy sacks must often be carried if you are guideless, and long days would be a strain.

I joined Powell at Melchthal, having travelled by the Rhone valley, the Grimsel, and Meiringen. As I descended the Grimsel, I passed by the Handegg falls. The power of

these was too much for me ; it seemed to beat my poor slight human life down ; they are *brutal* falls, brutal as some blind, mindless monster might be. Passing down into the lower land, I was, as in 1891 (though I barely mentioned this when briefly recording my visit to Gadmen), *very* much struck by the extraordinary freshness, greenness, and prosperity of the country as compared with the poor ruined old Rhone valley which I had left behind me to the south ; though, in truth, I found the houses too pretty and new—there was no suggestion of history about them.

Coming into the country this time in August, the food was good ; and that too contrasted favourably with the Rhone valley food.

We soon went on to the primitive little inn at Frutt, which is situated at a height of 6160 feet above the sea in a treeless region rich in flowers. This seemed to be still a refuge for the Swiss, still uninvaded by the swarms of foreigners who take possession of their land in summer. All was simple, but all was good ; and the two chief open red wines, Hallauer and Tiroler, were excellent. I can strongly recommend them to a certain writer who once wandered across country to Rome. One day some roving musicians played to us during dinner, and I heard the zither once more. Another day there was a native dance in the restauration at the basement, and it was quaint to see a fragile little compatriote of ours (ordered abroad for overwork, earning her living by translating, typewriting, and what-not) dancing opposite to a massive young Swiss peasant, and fearfully fascinated by his huge stamping nailed boots.

We explored more grass and shale passes from here ; and I must say that a man may be an old hand at rock, snow, and ice, and yet be quite at sea on these very steep grass

slopes and shelving ledges sprinkled with loose pebbles or shale. It is in just such places that many a one has perished, '*verunglückt beim Edelweiss-suchen.*' There are dangerous hills of this sort beyond Champéry, off to your right as you go towards the Col de Coux; and the 'Hauts-forts,' lying behind these, is a good example of a ledge and shale hill requiring care.

On August 18, we left at 8 A.M. for the Engstlen-alp, and set off from there at 10.15 A.M. for Titlis. This mountain was new to both of us; but we made a variation on the usual way up, since the tracks led over covered glacier that looked rather unsafe for a party of two, the snow being rotten. We kept more to the ridge from the Reissend Nollen. From the summit one has a good view. Near at hand are the Thierberge, Sustenhörner, Fleckistock, Fünffingerstöcke, and other fine summits; while the Oberland mountains, more distant, are very interesting to study.

What a mass of snow and glacier there is here, for such a small mountain! For it is but 10,627 feet above the sea. I have always denied the existence of 'a snow line,' in the sense in which it is invariably employed. It is always taken to mean 'the level above which snow is found all the year round'; and is not given for south and north slopes separately, but simply for a given district such as 'the Alps.'

For consider the south and north slopes of a range, to begin with. I have walked over huge snow-fields to the Col du Géant, and descended on a dusty mule path to Courmayeur. I have ascended over ice and snow to the Col de Valsorey, and descended over scree into the Val d'Ollomont. What snow line here?

Again, an isolated peak of 11,000 feet will probably not be a snow mountain at all; but most certainly a group in



which the heights run from 10,000 to 11,000 feet *will* be a snow group, and will contain snow fields and glaciers.

And again (I am still referring to the Alps), so much depends on what I may call local meteorological conditions. There are places (and this side of Titlis must be one) where some eddy, or the like, causes the snowfall to be concentrated, and here it will accumulate beyond any August's power to melt it; and thus we have snow-fields at an unusually low level.

On August 19, Powell and I left Engstlen-alp for the Nessenthal inn (a nice and quiet place), and thence, with a porter to bear some of the load, mounted to the Windegg hut; the porter then returning. We were alone there, we two; and it was as well, since the hut was very small.

Our general plan for the immediate future was to find out a pass to the Göschenthal one day, carrying only lunch; and then to make the pass next day, carrying our full sacks.

So on August 30, we set out to look for a way. But it came on to rain, and mist covered the heights. We got under a sloping stone (they always slope the wrong way!), and waited until we were thoroughly cold, and the rain had begun to drop on us from all parts of our roof; and then returned, very damp, to our hovel. It *was* rather cheerless!

Next day was hopelessly wet, and we stayed in. Occupation ran short; and in the way of amusement, I think that we got most out of a timid but hungry mouse which had long fits of irresolution as regards the advisability of entering a paper bag containing crumbs. The crumbs were nice, but the bag was alarming.

The 22nd was fine. So we set off at 8 A.M. (rather late, although one need not as a rule have very early starts in these smaller mountain groups) to find our pass, *and* make it with our sacks and all, in one bold stroke; for we had lost two days already.

We went up the right bank of the Thierberg glacier, and then crossed it to the foot of the westerly arête of the Thierberg (summit 3343). Gaining this arête we followed it over first rotten rock and then snow to a ridge overlooking the Kehle glacier. We descended this ridge (of snow) to the Thierberg-limmi; and by easy but rotten rock reached the Kehle glacier. We then went down steep and avalanchy snow on the left side of the glacier, until we were stopped by a crevasse that ran right across, its lower lip much below its upper.

We saw no way of crossing this but by jumping. And since the first man, if he slipped on alighting and shot down the slope, would have certainly pulled the second man over, we unroped for the jump. It was quite easy to clear the crevasse, as it was more a jump down than a jump across. After all it turned out that our gap was rather a fall of the ice over rock than a true crevasse.

We reached the Göschenen-alp<sup>1</sup> inn at 7.15, and stayed till 8.15, having a meal; and then we went on down to Göschenen, where we put up at the Cheval Blanc.

Next day to Wassen, which I had not seen since 1880. I found in an old book our entry, with one of the comic drawings to which one is given in one's youth.

On August 25, Powell and I went to the Vor-alp hut. This lies in the Rhone glacier group of mountains, up a wild and solitary valley running south-east, that is bounded on its south-west side by the Sustenhorn range, and on the north-east side by the ridge containing the Fleckistock and Winterberg; this latter ridge separating it from the Meienthal, which descends from the Susten pass to Wassen. Next day there was wind and rain. Powell descended to Göschenen for more food, while I cleaned up the hut, and

<sup>1</sup> It may be Göscheneralp, though it is Göschenthal.

then reconnoitred alone for a pass to Meien between the Fleckistock and Winterberg. There were two couloirs that looked promising. I went up the higher, lying nearer to the Winterberg. It did not lead direct on to the glacier on the other side, and moreover was decidedly dangerous, as it was a 'shoot' for stones. So I decided that the lower, snow, couloir lying nearer the Fleckistock was better for us, though stones fell on it too; it, by the way, led directly on to the glacier on the other side.

After a day spent in other exploration, we set out on August 28 for Meien, mounting the couloir which I had decided formed the better route. Since some stones fell down the couloir while we were on it, we left the snow for rocks to our right which looked easy from below. I wonder whether any amount of experience would enable one to allow for the illusion produced when one looks *up* at rocks? Steeply inclined ledges look horizontal, and vertical chimneys acquire a most comforting slope. Often one looks up at a man struggling in such a chimney, and one wonders what all the fuss is about. Once more I found that one had been taken in; and we were both glad when we finally left our rocks, on which we had felt very insecure, for the snow again, higher up.

On the other side, after leaving the glacier, we came to one of those baffling cliffs that so often occur on the hill-sides far below the level of the actual climbing part. But a prolonged search led us at last to a small path, or ledge, cut in the solid rock for the use of the sheep and goats; and we got down easily then.

In the course of our search for a way we had been bothered by sheep following us for salt. In one passage we climbed down a place where hands were absolutely needed, the little pitch being vertical. But each sheep sprang out

on to a sloping rock, and, before it could slip, sprang back, inwards, to the foot of the pitch. I seem to have read of such a manœuvre in one of these attractive American books about animals, in a story of a mountain sheep. No sheep could have *rested* on this half-way sloping rock.

We got to Meien in good time and put up at one of the three primitive little inns kept by three brothers (I believe); ours being the Hôtel Sustenpass. The landlord was a simple and good fellow who talked either his own patois or American. I have since then come across other returned Swiss and Italians who startle one with American of a very nasal character. The mountains draw them back. As far as I know, this home-longing is very common among emigrants from the Alps. But I did not find this to be the case among the Swiss in Argentina; I myself think that the spirit of wealth-seeking that is so strong in that country destroys such spiritual yearnings as this.

To the general public, who do not follow routes closely with a large scale map, a detailed description of our wanderings would be almost meaningless; so I will be very brief.

One day we found, and another day we crossed, a pass that led us from Meien over the eastern end of the Titlis group, not far from the Spannorts (great and small), into the comparatively unfrequented and very beautiful Erstfelderthal; where we slept at the little Krönte hut. Such an out of the world little hut it was! The chief users of it appeared to be chamois hunters; and from one of them I learned that magazine rifles may not be used in this chase.

Another very interesting expedition from Meien (whither we returned) was over the same group nearer the west end, to the Engstlen-alp. We first crossed a col<sup>1</sup> between the Wassenhorn and the Grassen, which we had reconnoitred

<sup>1</sup> The Wassenhornjoch. See p. 224.

earlier, then descended to the Wenden glacier, whose stream flows down towards Gadmen, and from this mounted to and crossed the Titlisjoch that lies west of Titlis. As we passed under the high ice and snow slopes of the Reissend Nollen on our way to the Engstlen-alp, we had to run the gauntlet of a very heavy and continuous fire of stones from above ; the rain that was now falling kept loosening them from the ice. This ended my first wanderings—here but very briefly sketched—with Legh Powell ; and we agreed to have more another year.

I made my way back to Binn, climbing the Wilde Frau, Blümlisalphorn, and Balmhorn with Mr. Leslie Scott and two of Abraham Müller's sons on the way.

Such a party we came across on the Balmhorn ! It was all ice, and steps were needed ; and yet there was one guide conducting three or four totally incompetent tourists—Swiss, I think. I saw the guide descending last, and these tourists coming down the ice steps below him in a sitting position. However, Providence looks after children and drunkards ; and, since no harm came to these, I suppose they were classed as the former. These tourists, for real climbers they were not, had no business to tempt this man (a poor sort of guide who I feel sure had few engagements) to take charge of them unaided. One must hope that they erred through complete ignorance.

I had known Binn now for eleven years, but had never seen it as it is seen by those who visit it at the usual time, viz., August and September ; for I had always been there in June. It was changed indeed !

The main streams now ran turbid, and the snows of the Ofenhorn had woefully decreased. Cherbadung and the Hüllehorn glistened ominously in the sun, showing the

presence of ice ; they too had lost much snow. But the change when details were examined was still greater.

I went up to the Geisspfad basin. I had used to approach it by a long slant up a snow slope ; and I now went up a path over an ordinary hillside on which were grass and flowers, or shale.

I had used to enter a white hollow, still in its winter sleep, with a flatness at the bottom just indicating the tarn. I found now a wide basin where the bees hummed above the flowers that nestled in the warm turf, and the reddish rocks glowed in the sunlight ; while, below, the rippling lake invited one to bathe.

Again, Wilhelm Schmid asked me to show him the ways up the Hüllehorn. When we got near the big couloir up which I had walked in June, I found that progress on the snow or ice was completely barred by two gaping crevasses that ran right across ; while the slope above, had one reached it over the rocks on which these crevasses abutted, was now of ice and swept by stones that were no longer covered and bound by snow. A most forbidding place.

We turned up where I had once ascended with Xaver Imseng, and easily gained the shoulder whence one looks down on the Rämi glacier by which we had come up from Binn. But the slopes of snow above, by which (though steep at first) Xaver and I had walked up to the top, were now in their lower part of clear ice. Water had been formed up against the rocks higher up, had sunk under the snow, and had come out here ; so I judged. And the axe revealed the fact that this ice could come off in flat slabs.

Wilhelm insisted on trying to get up ; but he soon had had enough of it, and I had to hold his feet as he turned.

Frankly, this little Hüllehorn was now a mountain that

I did not at all care to tackle ; nor, I believe, should I have cared to do it with guides.

It was evidently not the time for snow climbs at Binn. But I had some very good days—necessarily quite alone—on the rock mountains.

One day, and by a strange oversight I had left my map behind, I went to look for the little Schienhorn by a route that I did not know, viz., round by the Geisspfad See. A more lost, desolate, and confused region I have never been in. I got quite astray ; looked over into valleys that I should have been far from, and passed over various cols ; and it was after long wandering that I reached the base of this rock needle—the *pièce de résistance* of rock-climbing in Binn. The top of it I did not reach ; there is a place where either a rope is thrown up round a rock, or the second man helps the first. Well ; I was alone, and am not a rock specialist in any case, so I retreated. [See p. 130.]

I found from the map, later, that the main theatre of my lost wanderings had the appropriate name of the ‘*Val deserta.*’

Pizzo Fizzo gave me a very good day ; and so did the Rothhorn, whose strange table-like summit overhangs the Geisspfad pass and which forms such a striking feature of the scenery when one picnics up by the lake. But the north Grampielhorn was disappointing.

Once more, too, I went off for the Devero-Tosa round. But this time I went by the Ritter pass ; and had some difficulty in finding my way on from the Valtendra pass in a mist, until I lighted on some red ‘D’s’ painted on the rocks by one of the Alpine clubs. And, returning from Tosa, I took the Hohsandhorn instead of the Ofenhorn, as that looked too icy.

But winter was coming on the heights ; and so on September 30 I went over the Safisch pass to Berisal, snow underfoot, and snow driving in my face.

## CHAPTER XIV

Vides, ut alta stet nive candidum  
 Soracte, nec jam sustineant onus  
 Silvæ laborantes geluque  
 Flumina constiterint acuto.

*Horace.*

SWITZERLAND IN AUTUMN, 1902 — RHONE-GLACIER AND  
 TITLIS GROUPS, AND CANTON GRISONS, 1903—SKI-ING  
 BEGUN, WINTER 1903-4

AT Berisal one always feels at home. The proprietress, Frau Bürcher, was supported by her daughter, Mrs. Keating, while I was there, as is I believe the case every summer, and all was as friendly and as efficiently managed as could well be. The pity is that, after all, Berisal is on a road 'half-way up'; and, though there are some expeditions to be made, you have a feeling every morning that you can only go up the road or down it.

I did some rather 'weird' wandering in new snow; of which one specimen will do for all. I went up the Steinen valley towards the glacier, all in snow; and managed to get up on to a ridge, running towards the Gibelhorn, to a small summit. I heard bells; and, getting down some steep snow that was only safe because it had already been avalanche-swept, I discovered eight poor sheep in a stone hut, surrounded by deep snow. I returned down the valley and told some peasants about it. The sheep *were* lost, and the search had been abandoned; so my day was a useful one. Another such day ended in return by lantern light; I always carried a lantern with me now.



The great difference between these excursions and similar ones made in winter is that the temperatures that I experienced were by no means so low as those encountered later, and one could judge very much better whether snow would avalanche. This last, however, became more and more difficult as the autumn advanced.

At Berisal I saw for the first time a certain kind of woodpecker which I believe to be rare.

I heard an excitement among some jays, and found them 'mobbing,' but at a cautious distance, a bird that I at once recognised as a woodpecker. The bird appeared to me to be black, with a very white bill and a raised red crest, and to be at least as large as our 'green' woodpecker. Its progress up the tree was made in a series of curious plunging, jerky rushes.

While on the tree it uttered at intervals a single piping note of a very peculiar quality; it attracted attention at once. When on the wing its note was quite different; of a group nature, and not a pipe at all. I hardly knew how to describe it, as it was not quite a rippling note, nor a chatter, nor a laugh.

I may add that the above description of the appearance of the bird was taken down at the time, and I had no glasses with me; but I saw stuffed at some hotel (I think the Grand hotel, Adelboden) a woodpecker that corresponded to it.

Since then I have never seen the bird, but have on two occasions heard the peculiar piping note: once near Les Avants and once near the Oeschinen Sec.

On October 14, I struck my tent once more, and settled down at the 'Croix Fédérale' at Champéry, which is some 3000 feet above sea-level.

It was exceedingly interesting to watch the winter coming on there. The air is crisp and fresh, but not bleak; the

woods take on autumn colours, and a walk in them, save for the greater dryness, is much like a walk in English woods at this time ; an experience of the memory-laden beauty of dying summer, full of regrets that it is a sort of melancholy luxury to entertain ; above, the heights that in summer look almost insignificant to those who are familiar with the snow giants of the higher climbing centres, begin to borrow from winter a dress of frost and snow that lends them a new aspect of remoteness and inaccessibility ; the summits and arêtes acquire their fantastic and treacherous cornices ; the rocks gleam and sparkle in the sun with their coating of ice flowers ; the slopes of the long ' Wild-heu ' grass, downward-combed, sprinkled with snow, covering a now hard-frozen soil, make one take to one's crampons ; and the zig-zag paths (such as that leading to the Pas d'Encel) above the tree limit become buried, so that the summer stroll becomes now a problem in avalanches. Indeed that particular route, viz., past the Pas d'Encel, by which you approach the harmless Susanfe valley on your way to climb (or walk up) the highest summit of the Dent du Midi, may be dangerous when summer has once gone, and before spring avalanches have fallen in May or June. Let none count on it for a descent to Champéry, coming over from elsewhere, between two summer seasons ; they may well find themselves cut off, or perish through refusing to recognise the danger. I heard of such an accident.

Sundays were interesting days.

In the week-time the men looked as Swiss mountain men usually do, unpicturesque and perhaps rather dirty. The women were decidedly ungainly in their masculine dress (the wearing of this on their part is a custom of that valley) in which the unsuitability of the female figure for man's attire is there unnecessarily emphasised by the absence of

anything in the way of a loose sheltering jacket. Little need as a rule for the brilliant red cap that they wear to distinguish them from the men; the narrow shoulders, wide hips, and lumbering gait betray them from afar.

But on Sundays the men show up well in their brown homespun suits, white collars and shirt-fronts, and wide brown felt hats. And the women have a most tasteful dress, and very pretty hats of straw. Those who have seen such a collection of Swiss peasants on Sunday cannot but regret the custom, or rather the total lack of customs, that clothes our peasantry on Sundays in badly-made bourgeois coats, and bowler hats (at best a hideous head-covering) sold off cheaply because out of fashion.

Mass in the morning; as you like in the afternoon; that seems the rule. And with not a few, 'as you like' meant rifle-shooting. I joined in this many times, and it was from my experience here mainly that I put together the notes given earlier.

I much wished to have some precautions introduced for the protection of the markers; but no one seemed to trouble. There was no regular signal, no drawing of bolts when the markers were out (they had not drop-targets). And while the men were out, shooters would aim and snap with empty rifles, or aim with full ones. As mentioned earlier, one young fellow next to me actually fired at one target while the markers were at the next; he had not noticed them!

I asked the President of the Commune about this, but he said that he could not interfere; if an accident occurred there would be an opening for change.

I used a modern Swiss army rifle (still in use now in 1910, but likely to be replaced soon I hear). It was singularly practical. You could only fire direct—there was no shifting

sight—but the back-sight was solid and strongly set in, and could not be broken off were the rifle dropped as could that of our Lee-Enfield. There was one motion for re-charging, a straight out and in, no turning of a bolt. And, greatest advantage of all, you could in a minute take the whole bolt to pieces down to the spring, without the use of any tool ; so that drying and oiling of all this important part after a wet day was a simple matter. A minor point was that the pull-through could be pulled to and fro in the barrel, so that two men could clean the barrels far more rapidly and thoroughly than with our sort of pull-through.

But the gun is doubtless a bit heavy to hold, and it may be that a shifting sight is better. To me it seemed long in the stock. Have the Swiss longer arms than we have ? By the way, it was characteristic of the Swiss familiarity with their weapons that, when I asked a man whether the cartridges contained cordite, he unscrewed a bullet, poured out the 'white powder' on his hand, put it and the bullet back again, and used the cartridge to shoot with.

I think that such moderate excursions as a man can make by himself at this time of year in such a place require more general experience than the bigger summer climbs. *Badminton on Mountaineering* naturally does not touch the question at all. Avalanche dangers, hardly gaugeable by summer tests, were one question ; boulders whose inter-spaces were hidden in snow another ; roots or logs on forest paths, also snow-covered, which led or might lead to a swift side-shoot of the feet from under one, another danger ; frozen shale in which one did not sink as in summer, another. But the worst of all was the long grass that seemed 'combed' down the steep slopes, through

which the boot nails would fail to reach the soil below—rather hard frozen for biting into at best.

On October 25, I judged the Pas d'Encel safe, and went up the Haute Cime of the Dent du Midi. It was deep snow in the region above the Pas and up the mountain's slopes. I saw a white hare up there. I took about seven hours to reach the summit, so laborious was the snow up above. Wonderful beauty and solitude at the top.

Of other expeditions I will mention only the Dent de Bonneveau, and the Hautsforts. The latter is a summit of some 8000 feet above the sea lying on the Savoy side of the frontier ridge near the Col de Coux ; and it proved to be a queer mountain. The summit was at the far end of a jagged arête. I could not well, I found, traverse the arête alone, and so I wished to reach it at a point near the summit. Various sloping gulleys led to this arête, and the difficulty was to get into a gully that should reach it far enough along. It took me a day's reconnoitring to find a way, but I did get up at last.

One interest at Champéry was the woodcutters' work in bringing down firewood and tree trunks. Many may know that in the Swiss mountains both hay and wood accumulate up above through the summer and early autumn, the transport to the valleys taking place when snow has smoothed down the slopes and the rough forest paths.

All the work seemed more or less risky here ; especially as these danger-hardened fellows make no pause when a temporary softening of the weather and then a return of the cold has left the tracks icy.

It is nerve-straining work merely to watch the men coming down in the front of their huge heavily-laden sleighs, quite unable to stop, braking with their feet for dear life. The sleigh, on ice, has 'taken charge'; all they can do is

to keep the pace down ; and every moment one expects to see their feet swept back and in under the sleigh, and themselves mangled and killed. Ugh !

Very dangerous too was the work with big logs. The path soon became an icy groove, however snowy it was at first ; and on this path it was necessary to form a dam of logs at certain places, from which a fresh start could be made, lest the logs should get up too great a speed and leap over the edge and charge down through the forest. The men are armed with a sort of heavy wood-pick with which they can hook a log to one side. But the forming of a dam in the face of following logs, and the breaking up of a dam, demand strength and nerve and skill such as I suppose are only paralleled in the similar work of getting timber down a river in America.

Truly, I have often thought, there is only one class in England that knows what such dangers are ; and that is the fisherman class of our coasts. And even they have not the hard, continuous grind of the Swiss mountain peasant.

At Champéry the church-bell music of the Swiss villages could be heard at its best. I have never known of bells out there being pealed, they are all chimed, or perhaps struck with hammers (?). And there is nothing that at all resembles the sound of a peal, the ringing out of a musical scale. One big bell beats out its sweet music to the air, and in and out between the strokes, weaving a kind of tune without a melody (like ' songs without words ' carried a stage further), ripple the lighter bells. The church tower ' makes music,' it does not give us a formal tune.

Later on I moved once more, and this time to Châteaux d'Oex.

By the middle of February the mountains had once more

done their healing work, and I returned to my duties in England.

While I had been away on sick-leave, the time of the summer vacation at the R. N. E. College had been changed. And so it came about that, when I went out in the summer of 1903, I found myself, after an interval of about twelve years, once more brought into contact with the better-known Switzerland of August and with the general body of English visitors and climbers. Empty hotels, snow-covered pastures and stone slopes, and (for the most part) clear streams, were now to be but memories; as were also empty huts and guides eager for an early engagement.

I joined Powell at Meien; we were to have exploration-work for *Ball's Guide* again, and the editor (of this second volume), Valentine Richards, was to join us later.

From Meien we soon passed to the picturesquely situated Göschenen-alp hotel. It lies high up in the Göschenthal, which joins the St. Gothard valley at Göschenen (where the tunnel begins); and it is a starting point for some of the best climbs in the Rhone glacier group of mountains. It was then in that stage of development that is so delightful to the mountaineer who is no longer young. It was comfortable, clean, and provided with baths; the food was good; the English who had found it out were of that mountain-loving order who flee before the advancing flood of tourists; and it was not crowded, even in August. Our first expedition was to find out some pass between the Winterstock and the Gletschhorn by which one could get to Tiefenbach on the Furka road. Two others joined us: an Experienced Mountaineer, and a Pure Cragsman. We found out a pass all right; it is called the Untere Gletsch-

joch now. On the other side we descended for a considerable distance over rocks ; and then, when we tried to pass on to the Tiefen glacier, we found, as is so often the case where the glaciers have been decreasing, a band of smooth ice-worn rock, and a gap, between us and the ice. Here we Experienced Mountaineers looked for the *best* way down, our Pure Cragman for a nice bit of rock-climbing. At the time we descended by his route, he gladly undertaking the responsible duty of being last man down ; but the best way down, guessed at then and verified later by Powell and others, was recorded in the *Alpine Journal* as *the* way, as was also a better route than that which we had followed up to the col from the Göschenen-alp hotel.

Powell and I returned alone next day from the Tiefengletsch hotel by the easy pass called the Winterlücke.

Then came a period of shocking weather, mist and snow. In the midst of it we tried for the Massplankjoch, but were driven back ; and we moved to Wassen to await a change.

Not for the first time in my record, nor for the first time in Powell's, the loss of days through bad weather and the desire to carry out plans (and in this case we had to meet a man away at Isenthal by a fixed date) caused mountain rules to be broken. Clearly we ought to have allowed the new snow to settle ; yet, none the less, on the first fine day we started off by Meien to make our double pass (see p. 212) to the Engstlen-alp.

When we reached the Stössenfirn (glacier) and could see our route up to our first pass, the gap marked 2744 in the map and named the 'Wassenhornjoch,' we saw that avalanches had already been falling. First we crossed the tumbled debris of one ; and while we were on it, lo ! another came down towards us over the bed of the old one. We ran, stumbling-wise, through the confused masses of com-



pacted snow and gained a rocky island ; and the new tide rolled and slid and jumbled over our tracks behind us.

But that which still stands out in my mind accusingly, as one of my two worst sins against mountaineering laws, was the exceedingly risky *traverse* of a steep slope leading to the col. It was quite unjustifiable !

When we repassed ten days later we saw that an avalanche *had* slipped here and had swept down on to the crevassed glacier below. And, judging by the weather conditions that obtained afterwards, we felt sure that it had fallen soon after our traverse. I shall never run the like risk again—I hope.

Of much that followed—how we reached Engstlen, and there had a pleasant off day, with friends, exploring a limestone cave called the Fikenloch ; how we passed over to Isenthal, and there met Valentine Richards ; how, with him, we came back over the Uri-Rothstock [9620 feet only, and yet a snow mountain with glaciers] to Engelberg, and thence by the Wendenjoch and Wassenhornjoch to the Meienthal and so over to Stein—I will say nothing. I will pass on to our successful climb up the highest summit of the Wichelplankstock. This is a very striking rock mass in the Titlis group. Seen from the east, as I saw it one day from the Rosshorn, it might well—with its steep cliffs and ridge broken into inaccessible-looking gendarmes—be called the Charmoz of this group. But indeed there is plenty to do in these regions for even the most adventurous cragclimber ; I need only mention the Fünffingerstöcke as another worthy exercise-ground for his talents.

We did not approach our mountain on its more impressive easterly side, but mounted from the south-west, from the Stössenfirn. Here, by choosing a good route, you can reach the actual arête without much difficulty ; and you

then find yourself between the highest and the second highest summits, looking down a tremendous precipice on to the Wichelplankfirn to the east or east by south. Now comes the real climbing, and a good though short bit it is. Powell led ; and soon we were on the top—though, as a matter of fact, there was only room for one at a time on the very top. Powell still keeping the place of honour, I went down first. While I was clinging to the rocks in a very steep place, a large stone, not suspected of being loose, was somehow detached up above. Fortunately the place was so steep that the stone caught the curve of my back only. Had it struck my head or my hands I must have been knocked out ; and I hardly think that the others would have been prepared for such a shock.

The ‘moral’ of this escape is, not only that one should be careful about stones in a general way, but that the first man down should look out for and throw down or put away safely all loose stones ; of course, taking care not to risk hitting men or sheep on the mountain or alp below.

We saw no signs of any previous ascent, and ours was the first to be recorded ; but Powell found, later, that the Engelberg guide Kuster had made an ascent prior to ours.

Soon after this Valentine Richards and I had a wander through part of east Switzerland ; passing through the St. Gothard tunnel to Olivone ; crossing the Garzura pass to Zervreila in the Lentathal, taking P. Scharboden on the way ; there climbing the Rheinwaldhorn ; and then passing by the Kanalthal, the Fanella pass, and the Kirch-alplücke to Hinterrhein and Splügen, taking the Fanella-horn and Kirchalphorn on the way. After a short stay at Splügen, where we went up Piz Tambo, I had to move homewards by the Via Mala and Thusis.

Of these wanderings I will give only what will be of interest now—at the time *all* was interesting.

Though Zervreila was an inn (I don't think I need speak of 'the inn at Zervreila'), and therefore our host and hostess presumably not of the poorest, I was struck once more with the lowness of the standard of comfort that one finds in the mountain regions in Switzerland as compared with that which one finds among even the poorest moorland or mountain peasantry in England.

There was, for guests, one kind of wine (very acid), dry bread, cheese, eggs, milk, and very hard and lean salt pork. The old couple themselves probably fared still worse. There was no tea, coffee, nor butter; no vegetables nor meat.

One and the same room served as *salle à manger* and *salon* for the guests, as kitchen and as bedroom for the old couple. They slept in a curtained four-poster, and took it in turns to issue forth when a very early breakfast (I had tea with me) was required.

Outside, unwholesome-looking pigs routed and grunted and roved. And there was always an evil-smelling kind of food being made for these pigs; coarse leaves, of the dock order I should say, were being boiled and then converted by pressure into a horrible pinkish mass. There was no garden.

Contrast with this a small inn, or even a peasant's cottage, in Exmoor!

The great interest of the Rheinwaldhorn, which we climbed next day, lay in its being entirely a new point of view; the climb gave us no excitement. But we were now in the centre of a different world from that which I knew best; the fine Bernina group was as near to us as the Berner-Oberland *massif*, and the Ortler seemed but

little further than either of these blocks of mountains. Tödi was relatively close ; and many smaller groups, quite new to me, added novelty to the scene.

On the way as we mounted a rock arête that would lead us to the main ridge (that running between the Rheinwaldhorn and the Güferhorn) by which we were to gain our summit, we had a very pretty sight of some six chamois. We had seen them descending the arête towards us, and had crouched down hoping that they would come close. But they saw us and bounded down to the Lenta glacier. We watched them crossing. Some stones fell from above across their route ; and the herd paused and waited, on the alert, the little ones keeping under shelter of the grown-ups. Nothing more coming down they made a circuit on the ice in a singularly agile and graceful way, and were soon safe on the rocks on the other side.

Of our day over the mountains to Splügen I will only note the fact that on the way to the Fanella pass I saw a pair of those wonderful birds, the *wall-creeper*, already spoken of. This time they were not in the regions of snow and ice, but in a place where any hill birds might have been. Only, if we were right in thinking that they were haunting a customary nesting-place (as their behaviour seemed to indicate), then this nesting-place appeared to be in some hole in the face of bare and overhanging rock.

What a wonderful *cañon* the river has made on the Via Mala route ! The water seems in places to have cut down like a fret saw. I suppose that the stones rolled down by the torrent form the cutting edge.

That winter I had a short time at Davos, and devoted eight days to adding to my stock of 'Pleasures of Life'

one not mentioned by Sir John Lubbock. For, though now middle-aged, I ventured to begin *ski-ing*.

Do people still begin as we did at Davos in those days ? There were 'learning' or 'practice' slopes, used day after day. These soon got plastered down into what, for all purposes of ski-ing, might almost as well have been ice ; and pitfalls, holes punched by the bodies of some learners, lay in wait to bring about the downfall of others. Down these terrible inclines we unfortunate beginners had to let ourselves go. No wonder that a man, who began with me, broke his ankle the first day.

How horrible similar slopes close to Adelboden seem to those who reach them on their return from some long expedition in proper snow !

Ski-ing at Davos, I found myself among a new race of people. To them a mountain was a 'thing to come down' ; to me it still remained a 'thing to go up.' Judging from my own experience, I should say that, as regards this new sport, there are advantages and disadvantages in being already an old mountaineer. Such an one, learning ski-ing late, can soon become a safe man for longer tours ; he can go up hill well, is at home where non-mountaineers may feel uneasy, and has a turn for getting down safely. But he is likely to begin his longer tours too soon, and to shirk the practice near home that is absolutely necessary if he is to ski in good style. He is also inclined to rely, to a dangerous extent, on the stick ; for he has an instinct for glissading, and is used to rely on his ice axe as a third leg. Certainly it is a wonderful sport, and the pleasures that it can give are perhaps, at the time, keener than any experienced in ordinary mountaineering. But I do not think that it can to at all the same degree fill the life, influence character, or cement friendships. I am a loyal mountaineer still.

## CHAPTER XV

'Surely the Gods live here,' said Kim, beaten down by the silence and the appalling sweep and dispersal of the cloud-shadows after rain. 'This is no place for men!'—*Rudyard Kipling*.

AROLLA AND PASSES TO THE EAST, 1904—AROLLA AND ZERMATT, 1905—BERNER-OBERLAND AND ZERMATT, 1906

ON August 5, 1904, I joined some non-climbing friends at Binn. There I did but little; and what little I did I will pass over. I will only remark that if any one wishes to see a good specimen of an old inscription, and to puzzle out the queer German ('Preid' instead of 'Bereite' for example), without encountering at the same time the greater difficulties caused by the obliteration due to sun, rain, and frost that outside-inscriptions suffer, he cannot do better than study that of 1667 which is cut on the ceiling of the restaurant at Heilig Kreuz. [See p. 289.]

August 23 found me once more at Arolla, and, this time, at the Hôtel Collon. It was difficult to recognise in my somewhat portly and bald host, M. Jean Anzevui (*fls*), the silent boy of 1882 and even the young man of 1887. I had not seen him since this latter date (unless perhaps for a few minutes in 1889).

I made friends with Perrier, since departed to the Argentine; and after a trial climb or so (the Za was one) we decided to go over the Cols de Mont Brûlé and Valpelline to Zermatt, thence by the Adler to Almagel, and thence

by the Zwischenbergenjoch to the Simplon valley ; and to finish up with Monte Leone before going home.

We took *young* Pierre Gaspoz ; ‘ Pierre de Jean.’ He was almost absurdly big and strong and young, but he seemed likely to make a really good guide later. Hitherto I had always passed from the Adlerjoch round to Saas Fee by the Egginerjoch. This time we were to make for Mattmark ; and we only had the *Climbers’ Guide* to direct us.

However, we managed the glacier part of our route quite easily ; but we missed the right way down from this to the valley, and got on to uncommonly steep and slippery turf broken with rock, really dangerous. Pierre reconnoitred and found a way ; but even he remarked that it was only his long practice as a herd-boy that made him safe in such a place. It was, I suppose, the same life that made *cheese* a necessity to him. Give him some cheese and dry bread, and he would sit slowly munching and looking at the mountains in perfect content. But once, when cheese had been forgotten, he was unhappy ; tinned meats, jams, sardines—nothing suited him.

We put up at the little Almigel inn ; and next day set off for the Zwischenbergenjoch, the pass from which my friends and I had been driven back by deep snow, and falling snow and mist, in 1898 (see p. 159). Arrived at the col, we saw the glacier deep below us. Opposite to us, or nearly opposite, were rocks ; and the glacier, which sloped up to its head on our left, passed far below on our right through a relatively narrow gateway, between the rocks on our side and the rocks opposite, to the unseen valley below that descended to Condo. We could reach the glacier easily by a traverse to our left towards the higher part of it ; but the question was, were we to reach the valley below by the glacier as a road, passing through

the gateway, or were we to make for the rocks across the way and descend to the valley by them, on the other side of the glacier? I was of opinion that this sinking and decaying glacier would not be badly broken up even through the narrow gateway, since glaciers quiet down as they die; and that, were we to take to the rocks, we should find big cliffs to descend. In fact, as there was a big drop to be made, I preferred to make as much of it as we could at once. By my route we should at least reach the place where the ice passed out of sight through the gateway, a point far below us; while by the other route we should probably find ourselves on cliffs high above this, with a big drop still to make and its character quite unknown.

Young Pierre, who voted for the rocks, was very *naïf*; he said he was always '*très entêté*' when he had an idea, and asked me to *order* him to descend by the glacier. So I did. It proved to be all right; and when, looking back afterwards, we saw the cliffs whose existence I had suspected, he frankly admitted that his way would not have done. He was quite a boy then, in spite of his strength and stature; and a very nice boy 'at that.'

On the way down, near Gondo, we saw wires overhead by which faggots of wood were shot down to the valley below. From one load some heavy blocks broke loose and fell; and, seeing that the wire crossed a road, the whole thing seemed to contain the seeds of accidents—men knocked on the head, horses driven wild with fear, and so on.

Sparks are, I believe, often given out owing to the great friction; and it would be quite possible for a traveller who found himself after dusk on the path of that lonely valley which we had just descended, to hear a hissing, ringing sound and see dimly a fiery dragon swooping down upon him. Only dusk was lacking for us to see this. In the



Tosa valley one sees such wires used for getting hay down from the heights.

We should have preferred to try a better pass than this, but there was new snow and mist ; not suitable conditions for finding the way over a more difficult route unknown to us.

We reached Gondo in good time, and took the 3.45 P.M. diligence to the Simplon. I remember passing through the debris of some very big avalanche that had come from the direction of the Rossboden glacier and had crossed the coach road ; but I have no note about it, and do not even remember whether it had been a mud or an ice-avalanche.<sup>1</sup> We put up at the Bellevue hotel on the other side of the pass. And next day we went up Monte Leone, an easy walk that brought this uneventful summer to a close.

August 3, 1905, saw me at the Hôtel Collon at Arolla. I found that the veteran Canon Girdlestone had now established himself there, as formerly at Zinal ; and he remained a sort of Father of the Hotel until his death, coming out there every summer.

My climbing companions for the first part of the time were Dr. Brushfield and Dr. Cockburn ; and our climbing was guideless. Climbs will bear repeating often, but not describing more than once. So I will only say that we three men took Miss G. Cockburn over the Petites Dents de Veisevi (*bâton* and all), and over Mont Collon ; while without her we went up the Za by the face [with help from the party ahead in the three chimneys mentioned earlier], and successfully traversed Mont Blanc de Seilon.

Then I was left alone.

An acquaintance and I took on old Jean Maitre, and began by traversing the Doves Blanches. These are the

<sup>1</sup> I think it was ice from the glacier.

most southerly peaks of the serrated ridge called the 'Grandes Dents' that bounds the Combe d'Arolla to the east; a ridge that runs on past the Za and the Dent Perroc to the Grandes Dents de Veisevi. You finish the traverse at the foot of the Za.

Some days of bad weather followed; and then we traversed the Pigne d'Arolla to see what the snow was like after the fresh fall. Though it was still rather new, we decided to try the Petit Mont Collon (11,631 feet) next day. This mountain seems to be overlooked as a rule, and is too little known. It stands at the head of the Otemma glacier, out of sight of the hotels at Arolla; though you see it well, if I remember aright, from the door of the old hotel at Evolène. It lies about south-west from Mont Collon; and is reached over the Col de Vuignette. We attacked it by the north-north-west arête; and had rather a cold and dangerous ascent.

At best, I should say, this arête is rotten; but when we went it was masked with deep powdery snow that itself gave no hold, and hid the loose rocks on which it lay; each step had to be rummaged for, and stones often came away. We were in the shade, and it was very cold, so that we got frozen while Jean Maitre sought for foothold.

What made it more trying to me was that my acquaintance had *one* idea as to the use of the rope, viz., that you must always have it stretched at full length; and our relations became rather strained when I tried to insist on closing up. I had to give way.

[Some days later Jean Maitre asked permission to put a question to me. It was: 'Why did you not close up on the Petit Collon arête? I did not like to tell you to do so, as you are such an old hand. But I *was* surprised!' Really, in self-defence, I had to tell him how it was.]

Well; we *did* get up in safety. But our progress had been so slow that it was 2 P.M. when we reached the north summit. It would have been easy to continue the arête to the southerly summit, which was a little higher; but we had no time for this.

It became clear to us that our arête was the one bad part of the mountain, and that this was mainly because it got practically no sun; that was why the snow had remained powdery. All the rest of the mountain was in order; the rocks were clear of new snow, and any snow there was gave good hold. Certainly frequenters of Arolla should visit this mountain, and invent ways up it on the southward-facing rocks, which would usually be free from snow, and which we, in descent, found good—or at least not dangerously loose.

Separating the Zermatt and Saas valleys runs northward from the great Monte Rosa mass a chain of huge mountains; and the highest of these is a group called the Mischabelhörner. Of this group again the peak called the Dom is the highest; it reaches an elevation of 14,941 feet above the sea, the greatest attained by any mountain lying wholly in Switzerland.

None who have been at Saas Fee can forget the impressive cliffs on that side; the ascent looks, and is, a serious matter. But on the other side slopes of snow and ice fall towards the valley; and the ascent is quite easy, though tiring, if snow predominate and steps have not to be cut.

It was this king of Swiss mountains that was our next objective.

We crossed the Col d'Hérens to Zermatt, and mounted from Randa to the high-perched Festi hut (9305 feet above the sea) to sleep.

Next day there was too much wind for the lantern to be used, and so we did not start until 5 A.M. We crossed the Festijoch so as to get to the north of the mountain where the slopes are less steep, and soon began the ascent in earnest. Luckily for us there was enough snow adhering to the ice to render steps unnecessary ; it was so bitterly cold that I don't think we could have stood the slow rate of progress of a step-cutting party.

I must admit that enemies of our sport might have pointed to this ascent when attacking mountaineering ; for we ran risk of frost-bite, and could not stop at the summit for a view at all. For once, at any rate, I felt that I was just ' doing ' a peak.

But, after all, is it not good for our characters if we now and then do a thing just because we meant to do it ? Horace, at any rate, couples 'justus' with 'tenax propositi.' And besides, I certainly was very glad to learn the way up.

We got to the top ; but of the view I know nothing. I don't think the day was clear ; and I know we had to descend at once. The Dom is notorious as a cold mountain. [Near the Festijoch, by the way, some sérac fell ; and a second party, who followed us down, was bowled over by some of the smaller ice blocks. No one was injured.]

My acquaintance decided to do no more ; so I soon found myself at the Bertol hut with old Jean Maitre and a sort of porter (a cowherd who did not intend ever to become a guide) bent on the Dent Blanche (14,318 feet). This mountain had always impressed me as singularly unapproachable in its aspect. It raises its head high ; its sides are steep and their rocks look icy. I much wanted to climb it ; but never intended to try it guideless. It seemed to me to be one of those mountains which might



1900-1901

THE DENT BRANCHE AND THE CO. OF GRAND CORNER FROM THE MOUNTAIN

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become a death-trap if the weather changed. And I think that my experience of the climb justified this view.

We set out from the hut in good time (about 4 A.M.), and, crossing the high glaciers, made for the great arête, the sloping backbone of the mountain, called in its lower part the Wandfluh. The illustration shows this mountain from the other side ; in it the arête by which we ascended lies to the left, and its lower part is out of sight, behind. The route is in the main up this arête ; and wonderfully easy, to my surprise, I found it. But there is a critical bit. A great tower in the arête has to be circumvented, and this throws you a little down on the steep west face. To recover the arête again on the other side of the tower you must, of course, ascend ; and the ascent is, unfortunately, over that kind of slabby rocks (*platten*) that appear to have been invented solely to prove how much superior guides are to amateurs when it is a matter of general adhesiveness and of foot-work ! And these platten when iced are practically impassable ; even a little snow over them may make their descent on return very dangerous. Old Jean Maitre knew the mountain well. After bad weather he used to observe with a telescope these platten ; and he was singularly expert in determining how soon the mountain would 'go.'

This time all went easily up to the top ; Jean Maitre never stopped to nurse me, nor I the porter ; and we reached the summit at 9.45 A.M. Not bad going for a party where the guided one was oldish, and the leading guide still older.

I was delighted to be there, at the top, at last. But snow began to fall ; thunder began to mutter.

We hurried down ; and on the now snow-sprinkled platten I was very glad to know that Jean Maitre was on the rope above me. The mist closed in ; even Jean failed

to strike the route down to the glacier until a lucid interval made things visible.

As we stood safe on the glacier soon after and looked up at the mountain wrapped now in mist and swept with bitter snowladen wind, I thought: 'Had this been a guideless party we should have been much slower, and would have been caught in all this near the top. And what of the descent of the platten, quite hidden in snow, when we reached them numbed with the cold?'

Yes; it was not a mountain for 'the likes of' me to try guideless. So, with a fine last climb, ended the summer.

Dr. Cockburn and I had agreed to have a good three weeks together in 1906; we had secured Maurice Gaspoz already, and were prepared to take on a second man when necessary. Our plan was to train first, each separately and in his own way, and then to meet each other and Maurice Gaspoz at the Eggishorn hotel about August 13.

I went earlier to the Eggishorn hotel (7195 feet), to try to get fit by good walks in that fine air. But somehow I got very unwell. At last I could eat nothing; and even water made me sick. So I determined to try my usual remedy of a round of passes.

Well! I did just get to Binn the first day; but it was a very thin and weak mountaineer that crawled up to Binn on the afternoon of August 6, bearing a sack that felt as though it were filled with lead! Nevertheless, next day I started with the chaplain, Mr. Downer, for Devero, over the Krieg-alp pass; and really did feel better that evening. We put up (we had to) at the new hotel. It was not bad, but there was no romance about it; and the average Italian tourists converse at table with such extraordinary vigour and vivacity that a man with a tired head cannot



but be glad when the meal is over. At Wassen I have seen the two sides of the table rise up and shout at each other. I mention this as a peculiarity or characteristic, not as a fault ; I have found Italian tourists most friendly, and would wish to speak well of them. Next day we went over by the Scatta Minojo and the Bochetta di Gallo (Hahnenjoch) to Tosa, and I really found the way very well. It was a long day, with sacks ; but I felt *much* better that evening.

On the next day Mr. Downer rested, and I went up alone for the Kastel and Fisch See round. Reaching the banks of the Kastel See about lunch-time, I settled down to enjoy myself. The lake before me sparkled in the sun ; all was fresh and beautiful ; I had nice food, and my half-litre flask was full of some Italian vin ordinaire. After lunch I felt sleepy ; though it somewhat gives me away, I must confess that I think this Italian vin ordinaire must have been more like weak sherry than Fendant. And I slept for an hour. I have always found that I never awake at once into actual life, unless I am in my usual bed in my usual home (or rooms). When on a visit, or when travelling, I have to pull myself back into touch with surroundings ; and for this I need help through the eye. I may wake to imagine myself still at Devonport, but the Pigne d'Arolla seen through the window soon pulls me back to Arolla.

On the present occasion I was awakened by a noise (it was thunder), and opening my eyes I saw—nothing ! I have never felt more astray than I did on this awakening. I had been back in England in my sleep ; and, awakening, I simply looked into blank whiteness !

The actual fact was that a thunderstorm had come on, and that I was wrapped in mist ; lake and mountains were alike invisible. I found my way home by following

the water from lake to lake. The next day we returned to Binn over the Hohsandhorn, and I found myself completely cured ; for the rest of my time I was indeed in unusually good condition.

On August 13, Cockburn and I went across to the Eggishorn, picking up Maurice Gaspoz at Fiesch ; and next day we went up the Grosse Wannehorn. We went, that is, to the usual summit where the bottles and names are. Young Cathrein told us later that this was a common mistake ; that we should have gone on (a mere walk) to the next summit, which we (in the mist) took to be the Schönbühlhorn.

Poor Cockburn had been unlucky enough to hurt his foot severely at Binn ; a stone had injured it one evening when he was strolling out in slippers. So, partly because of this and partly because of the bad or poor weather, we did nothing on the 15th, 16th, and 17th. On August 18, we went to the Concordia pavilion ; but bad weather kept us tied there next day. On the 20th, we started at 10.30 A.M. and waded up to the Mönchjoch. I find a note that ' new snow lay on this side up to a depth of one and a half feet, on the other side up to two feet.'

Our object was to get to Grindelwald, and under existing conditions it seemed best to make for the entrance to the ' Eismeer Station ' of the Jungfrau railway, and to descend to Grindelwald by this instead of by the full glacier route ; the latter might well be dangerous then, Maurice said.

Unluckily neither he nor we knew where this station was. We climbed up *higher* to look for it, but naturally did not find it ; the real way was down past the Bergli hut. Finally we descended over somewhat dangerous snow to the hut. There we learned from another party that the station was below us ; I think we went out later and saw the lighted mouth of the entrance tunnel.

Next day, the 21st, we descended to the tunnel. We thought the way down very unsafe, as a slip of the snow above us might easily have occurred, and have caused us to be pushed over on to the glacier below.<sup>1</sup> Near the entrance again stones were falling, and we had to watch our opportunity to rush in under cover. Once inside, the first thing that struck us was the boldness of the enterprise; here was not only a tunnel, but a huge cavern, for the station and its large restaurant, blasted out of solid rock.

But the Eiger glacier station soon came under our notice, and made us feel that the whole thing was a desecration. The view of the Eiger would be grand; but the foreground of swarming tourists (mostly Germans, it seemed to us) eating sausages and ham-sandwiches and reading Baedeker, and the tawdry station and restaurant, the theatrical-looking loafers who acted as 'guides' on to the glacier (feathers in their hats were much in evidence, though this was Switzerland and not Tirol), and even the would-be picturesque attire of the railway officials, all vulgarised the scene. Not only mountaineers, but all travellers of just taste, must surely feel that this railway is a desecration of nature; something like a merry-go-round in Westminster Abbey.

We then descended to the Scheidegg, and so by the steam railway to Grindelwald. On the way, a local guide told us that the Wetterhorn was in good order; so after lunch we began to make for the Gleckstein inn, which stands by the old club hut, to sleep there for the Wetterhorn.

But while we were halting at the 'Wetterhorn hotel' near the upper glacier, we found Maurice very much disinclined to ascend the Wetterhorn couloirs so soon, fearing avalanches or stones brought down by melting snow; and

<sup>1</sup> A bad accident occurred here in 1910.

we held the same view. So we stayed the night at this hotel.

From what we saw two days later, I believe the local guide had been right, and that we might have tried the mountain at once ; for the rocks were singularly free from snow. At the Wetterhorn hotel we met the engineer of a curious 'telpherage' lift that was to raise passengers from the valley to some point high up and near the Gleckstein inn, I think. What a strange enterprise ! We wondered what sort of public it would be that would like to be hoisted up in a kind of basket, through empty space, on this dizzy wire rope. Truly the Swiss stop at nothing in their development of the '*Fremdenindustrie*' !

Next day we went up to the Gleckstein inn. It is magnificently situated at about 7700 feet above the sea. The air was fine, the view grand, our hostess bright, the food and wine good ; and the charges were so moderate that we not unreasonably formed the opinion that the place was being worked up regardless of profits, and that, once started and popular, the tariff must ultimately be something very different.

For the benefit of those who do not know the mountain, I may say that it is called *die Wetterhörner* (plural), and has three summits. Ours, the Hasle Jungfrau (12,150 feet), is put down as a few feet lower than another called the Mittelhorn. It stands forward over the valley ; and I think that, when one uses the singular 'the Wetterhorn,' one refers to the summit that we ascended.

On August 23, we set off at 2.15 A.M. with Maurice Gaspoz, and found the rocks and the couloirs in astonishingly good and safe condition ; though at any time there was, we saw, real danger if the ascent of one party was not made with a wary eye on the movements of others. We reached the

col, from which one would descend to Rosenlauri at 5.40, and had a halt. It was quite an easy climb up to the top, which we reached at 6.25 A.M. A fine place. There must be few who have not seen pictures of the mountain; for even the railway advertisements give them. It rises in one huge cliff from the bottom of the valley; and so is far more striking to the eye than many loftier peaks that are based in the high snow fields. But the view from it is, on the whole, not a wide one; the main features in it are the near mountains of the same group, the Schreckhorn in particular being magnificent. So, at least, my memory of it remains. Still there was much to see; and we picked out mountain after mountain from this new point of view, until the cold drove us down to the col again.

There we had to stay some thirty-five minutes until some other parties had come up; and then, keeping a watch always on the movements of people above us, we rapidly descended to Gleckstein, reaching it at 9.15 A.M. We left at 10 A.M., and reached Grindelwald at 12.10 P.M.

We found that Maurice Gaspoz wanted to have a second man for the Schreckhorn (13,385 feet), which was our next aim, and for what was to follow; and for the provisions a porter was needed. What with getting a guide, porter, provisions, and an extra sack, it was late when we started, and 8.40 P.M. before we reached the Schwarzegg hut, a finely situated cabane standing at 8265 feet above the sea.

For various reasons our plans for the Schreckhorn became somewhat modified. I went off next day with the (very poor specimen of a) guide whom we had brought up from Grindelwald to ascend the mountain by the ordinary route, in which you strike the south-east arête, the great arête that runs towards the Lauteraarhorn, not very far from the summit; while Cockburn took a day's

rest (really much needed after our rush from the Wetterhorn and hot, afternoon ascent to the hut from the valley), intending to make the traverse in which you reach the summit by the arête from the Nässihorn (*i.e.* from the north-west), and then descend by the usual route, with the two guides on the day following, if the weather held. I had read and seen pictures of the couloirs that have to be crossed on the usual route up the Schreckhorn, and knew that they could be very dangerous for snow avalanche or falling stones. But I was not prepared to find that, in addition to these risks run higher up, one had to run the gauntlet of ice avalanches at the very start. Yet so it was.

We set off up a broad white highway of snow-covered ice ; and to our right were cliffs crowned by the threatening green-white séracs of the higher glacier called the '*Schreckfirn*' in the map ; and the debris over which we passed showed that the threat was often carried out.

Further up our snow road we ascended to this higher level at a place where our lower ice and the upper glacier were separated by rocks of no great height and not steep.

From near the hut one can watch a party ascend the broad white road under the cliffs ; they then vanish on the rocks, being indistinguishable to the naked eye against such a background, and then reappear, standing out clear to view for a moment, as they pass from these on to the higher glacier.

My man was one of those very ordinary guides who always follow the same route whatever the condition of rock or snow, always leave axes behind at the same place without thinking whether they may not, on some particular occasion, be wanted up above, and always unrope at the same place whether the glacier below be in its normal open condition or temporarily masked with snow.



ON THE SCHRECKHORN - CROSSING THE UTTER CLIFF.

10. 1911  
ADAMS, J. S.



He had, I imagine, only been up the Schreckhorn when the couloirs were icy or dangerous, and so he muddled about up and down the rocks, which after all he did not know, when it was clear that under the then-existing conditions we could gain height far more rapidly and as safely by using the couloirs—especially at their edges. I found later that other guides, better than my man, were doing this; there appeared to be but negligible risk from stones on this occasion, none falling all the time.

We reached the top ridge at 7.45 A.M., and halted half an hour for food. In the whole ascent there was little that one could call 'climbing' save during the last half-hour, 8.15 to 8.45, which took us to the top; and even that was inferior to the Petite Dent de Veisevi in quality. But it is a grand mountain to be on. Leslie Stephen, writing of it, says: 'The Schreckhorn is an example of a mountain in the very centre of the regions of frost and desolation. Four great glaciers seem to radiate from its base. The Peaks—Finsteraarhorn, Jungfrau, Mönch, Eiger, and Wetterhorn, stand round in a grim circle showing their bare precipices of rock.'

In a word, the Schreckhorn, whose name and appearance suggest great difficulty, turned out to be reasonably easy, though it clearly could be very dangerous. It was even more of a surprise than the Dent Blanche had been.

At the top we met a young Harvard man who had come up the north-west arête—*i.e.* from the direction of the Nässihorn. We had seen this party make for this route earlier; they had parted company with us when we left the lower ice and climbed the rocks to the upper glacier.

We all came down together; and, his guides using the snow of the couloirs a great deal, and my man following, we were at the Schwarzegg hut again at 11.25 A.M.

I tried to get some much-needed sleep ; but, strange to say, there were too many flies. I think that this was due to the dirty tins, etc., lying about. I have long been very strongly of the opinion that every hut should be provided with a refuse-box, and provision made for the periodical clearing out of this. In the cold air of those heights meat tins and the like take very long to become clean ; and the relatively-rare warm days, just the days when the huts are used, bring out smells from whole generations of refuse. And those unclean things, flies, are even worse than the smells.

Next day, August 25, two parties set out to traverse the Schreckhorn as the young Harvard man had done. One was composed of Cockburn with Maurice Gaspoz and our inferior second man ; the other of Captain Knox with Rudolf Almer and a second man of very fair climbing powers. [I noticed something about this man's face which made me feel sure he could not be relied on in difficulties. I mentioned this impression to Captain Knox ; and he told me later that it had been a just one. There is a lot to be deduced from faces. Most guides can climb most things ; and, for general purposes, intelligence and character are what one wants. Of course exceptionally difficult cragclimbing, such as some of that found on the Chamonix Aiguilles or in the 'fancy' Dolomite climbs, demand special technical skill. But even then the man with the right sort of face will tell you whether he can do the thing or not.]

They did not get off until 5.45 A.M., so I had breakfast with them. When this was done, one of three young Swiss who were there, and I, cleared out the hut and shook out all the rugs.

Midday came, and with it the usual off-day hunger.

But alas ! we had nearly run out of food, and though we had sent for some, I did not know when it would come up ; so I did not like to eat up the little left. Hence I had to fast from 6 A.M. until the evening meal, when supplies came up ; and very long the day seemed. In the afternoon the Swiss and I looked out for the two parties. At last we saw them come to the edge of the upper glacier, to the place where one descends to the broad white road home. Before they had reached this and begun to descend it, enormous masses of ice fell over the cliffs from the *séraes* above, and swept the whole breadth of the route. Had this fall occurred some twenty minutes later, it might have destroyed both parties.

I had up to now never seen *steigeisen* (i.e. spiked climbing irons) used by guides save in Tirol. I was surprised to find all the guides whom I saw at the Schwarzegg, or at any rate most of them, using them. My guide, and those with the young Harvard man, kept them on all the time, for the rocks and all, and I think the others did.

The Almer family seemed still to the fore. I saw Rudolf, with whom I had climbed a little when I was with Mr. Coolidge and Christian Almer. I saw also Ulrich Almer, whose photograph appears in the *Pioneers of the Alps*. And I was surprised to see how small both of the brothers were. I saw a Christian Almer of the third generation, son of him whom I had been used to regard as 'young Christian,' who in his turn was son of the old pioneer guide of Tyndall and Whymper days, the days of 'Peaks, Passes, and Glaciers.' Finally, I saw Hans Almer, a man of resolute face, who looked as though he must be a good guide.

We made an off-day of Sunday, August 26. Our plans were to gain the great north-west arête of the Finsteraarhorn by mounting from the Finsteraar glacier to the

point in it that is called the Agassizjoch, to climb the arête to the summit, and then to descend by the usual route (which I had followed in 1894) and to pass over the Grünhornlücke to the Concordia pavilion. So next day Cockburn and I set off with Maurice Gaspoz and a second man of better quality than our last (in fact, with Captain Knox's late second man). Starting at 2.45 A.M., we reached the Finsteraarjoch at 6.45 A.M., and halted from about 9 A.M. to 10 A.M. for food close to where one begins to climb the mountain-side to the Agassizjoch.

I should guess that this is one of the ascents that might be perfectly safe earlier in the season with more, but of course firmly settled, snow. The bergschrund might be closed, the ice we found might be snow (I fear this is an 'Irishism,' but it is so useful in mountaineering matters that it deserves to be established as an 'idiom'), and the loose stones above might be fast bound by a covering of good snow. As it was, the situation was this: the bergschrund had to be attacked and climbed, and then a traverse to the right, over ice, had to be made to the rocks. When once the lowest part of these, rather smooth and interspersed with ice, had been mounted, the rest was a safe walk up over easy rock to the pass. Directly above the point of attack on the schrund and the traverse was an ice slope down which slid continually sand, pebbles, and now and then a larger stone; at any moment a bigger rock *might* come. The great danger was lest a knock from a stone (and they had distance enough in which to get up plenty of way) should dislodge a man from the ice steps; for then the whole party would be sent flying down over the schrund again on to the hard ice and stones below, and disablement at the very least would be the result. However, all went well.

Yes, I feel sure that this joch would be both safe and still easier if properly clad with good snow. As it was, I don't think we took more than half an hour to climb from below the schrund to the top of the joch, so the danger at the bottom did not last long.

Somewhere above this, as we climbed the rocks of the main arête, two guideless Swiss who had been with us, and now chose to lead, dislodged a big stone. Maurice Gaspoz was designedly on their very heels, and cleverly stopped it against his chest ; it was, in truth, rather a near thing for our party.

Also we had ice steps to cut over a sort of snow shoulder, and the wind made it quite difficult to hold on ; indeed we all crouched. The Hügi-sattel, at which we joined the usual and easy route from the Concordia hut, was reached at 12.35, and the summit at 1.40.

As is so often the case, there was less wind on the top than on the arête. I take it that the wind is there thrown directly upward by the mountain, and sweeps onward somewhat *above* the top. Anyhow we found we could enjoy ourselves there for forty minutes.

We set off down at 2.20 P.M. ; reached the Hügi-sattel at 3. P.M. ; the usual 'breakfast-place' gave us a halt from 3.35 to 4.30 P.M. ; the Grünhornlücke was reached at 6.45 P.M., and the Concordia pavilion at 7.50. It had been a grand day.

Next day (August 28) we passed over the Lötschenlücke to Ried.

On the following morning (August 29) I went down to Kippel to call on the Kaplan who had invited me ten years before to come 'next time' and drink a bottle of wine with him. He did not actually remember me, but he was immensely pleased that I had remembered the invitation

all these years. I found him much aged, but very cheery ; and he and I and a middle-aged sister of his from Basel sat for a good time chatting.

On my return to Ried, I found that Cockburn felt it would pay better in the end for him to rest a day or so and rejoin me at Zermatt, while I went over the Bietschhorn (12,965 feet) with Maurice Gaspoz (our Grindelwald man had been paid off at the Concordia).

It turned out that all this time Cockburn had had a rheumatic attack brewing which came on next day, and he climbed no more that summer. But I was rejoiced to find, the following summer, when he came out in his normal condition, and not overworked, that he had a splendid time, quite making up for what he lost this summer. In the afternoon (August 29) Maurice and I went up to the Bietschhorn hut. There came also two Swiss climbers, guideless, one of whom was Dr. Hans Brun of Luzern.

It was a primitive hut. There was no stove, and hardly any vessels of any sort. An open fire had to be made in the outer division of the hut.

Next day (August 30) we set out at 2.30 A.M., and reached the Bietschjoch at 4.5. After a short halt we crossed the glacier, and reached the rocks of our arête at 4.45 A.M.

This mountain too was a great surprise. When one sees it from the south, lifting its head proudly over the Rhone valley, its cliffs look unclimbable. And even when a shifting of the point of view reveals its more sloping arêtes, it hardly looks more accessible ; it still preserves the formidable appearance that (to my mind) it shares with the Dent Blanche. One should certainly wait until its rocks are in good condition, as they were now ; but the climb by the usual route cannot be called a difficult one.

Setting off again at 5 A.M., Maurice and I did not put on



THE BETHUNE MOUNTAIN FROM THE W.N.W.

TO ALL  
ATTENTION



the rope for one and a half hours ; and the only real reason (apart from the rules which in a sense bind a guide) for having it on at all was that the second man might, in one or two places, be hit by a stone dislodged by the first.

But, easy or not, it is a marvellously striking arête to be on, and the view is very fine, the mountain being somewhat outlying and well placed between the Berner-Oberland and Valais groups. I can most strongly recommend the climb, guided or guideless ; but good rock conditions should be waited for, and a fine and windless day.

We stayed at the top, uplifted in space on that wonderful knife-edge of rock, for over an hour. The Swiss photographed us at intervals on the way down, and Dr. Brun most kindly sent me some beautiful prints later.

The illustration shows the mountain as seen from the heights lying near the Lötschen pass. The arête by which we ascended is to the right of the summit.

Leaving the summit at 9.20 A.M. or so, we unroped at 11.45, and halted at the parting of the ways (to Ried and Raron respectively) from 12.10 to 1.20. Then Maurice and I set off for descent to Raron, beginning with the terribly stony region called '*Im Rämi*.' We passed down a valley, the Bietschthal, which Maurice, who has imagination, had remembered as the wildest he had ever seen, and reached Raron at 4.30.

It is noteworthy how one sometimes finds primitive Switzerland, and the Switzerland of tourists, interpenetrating one another without mixing. On the Rhone valley line for example, Salquenen, one station for Leukerbad, is quite out of the world and unaffected by tourists, while the next, Leuk-Susten, is as modern as any.

Here, at Raron, we found primitive Switzerland ; but

the food, and especially the wine, was none the less good. We reached Zermatt by rail about 9.30 P.M.

Next day (August 31) we went up to the Schwarz-See hotel for the Matterhorn traverse. It was advisable to have three men on the rope for the rest of the climbs, and so I engaged a young guide, Adolf Aufdenblatten, of whom Maurice knew something.

[I confess that I rather 'fancy myself' in judging of guides! I gave earlier an unfavourable judgment, subsequently justified, without giving the name. Here I give the name. For both from his aspect and from my subsequent experience of his powers I came to the conclusion (and recorded it in my diary and in his 'book') that this young guide would soon be recognised as, and would long continue to be, a guide of the very first rank.

As I write this some three and a half years later, all I know is that Cockburn next year formed just the same opinion. Certainly if there is still climbing in store for me at Zermatt in the future, I shall seek him out.]

At the Schwarz-See I learned that lately some climber (was it Dr. Hermann Seiler?) had found out a new route for the earlier part of the ascent, one safer from stones; but that it was still necessary for parties to keep together.

We had 'breakfast' at 11.30 P.M., and set out at midnight. Reaching the hut at 2 A.M. September 1, we found some five or six other parties getting ready to move on, and waited a little. Further on we waited again from 2.30 to 3 P.M.

Our care (and courtesy) was rewarded by some three or four other parties scrambling past us in the dark, to take the lead; Maurice as a 'foreigner,' and Adolf as junior, did not like to assert themselves. The honourable exceptions were the parties of Captain Knox (whom I thus

met again), and of Mr. Stead of Clifton ; English manners showed to advantage for once at any rate !

The 'new way' proved to consist in keeping more to the arête until (I think) near the disused higher hut where we joined the old route. It was strange to be climbing the terrible Matterhorn by lantern light up what was almost a dusty path.

At the old hut we halted for food from 4.50 to 5.20, and then *we* went ahead ; all danger from stones was now over.

We were half an hour (6.30 to 7) on the ropes above the shoulder, reached the Swiss summit at 7.25, and the Italian rather later.

What a contrast to my ascent of 1893 ! *Then* we had found ourselves on snow, on the Swiss summit, wrapped in mist, bristling with electricity, with an ice slope behind us which none of us felt easy about, while this, as well as all the rocks below, was being steadily covered by the falling snow ; our retreat being gradually cut off.

*Now* we basked for an hour on the dry rocks of the second summit, enjoying the magnificent view, and secure in having warm and dry rocks all the way down on the Italian side. As Whympers says, not one of the principal peaks seem to be hidden from this wonderful view-point. All the Pennine mountains—Dent Blanche, Weisshorn, Monte Rosa—peaks without end. The Berner-Oberland mountains with their king the Finsteraarhorn. The Simplon and Gothard groups ; the Disgrazia far away. The Viso one hundred miles off. The Maritime alps, one hundred and thirty miles away. The Dauphiné alps and the Graians. And, distant and majestic, Mont Blanc. It was wonderful. We left at 8.30 A.M.

It is a very striking descent on the Italian side in spite of the ropes ; and how one could get down without them

I cannot imagine. Even with their help it would be a terrible descent in bad weather, with ropes clogged with snow and hands frozen. We halted at the Italian hut from 12.30 to 1 P.M. ; and left the rocks—*i.e.* finished the climbing—at 1.45 P.M.

I was sorry not to learn the usual way down from the hut to Breuil ; but, as we intended returning this same day to Zermatt by the Furggjoch, my guides left this route at some point or other.

At 2.15, we looked down on the glacier that we wished to reach (the Forca glacier), but could not find a direct way down to it.

Finally we went off to the right, had an awkward bit of rock climb on to a snow couloir, jumped a rather wide ice groove in this, down which stones came, and descended on the other side. We reached the glacier at 3. P.M. After that it was plain sailing.

We had an hour's halt for food, and reached the Furggjoch at 6.5 P.M.

From there we did not follow the glacier route by which Cockin, two other friends, and I had descended in 1898 earlier in the season, when there was more snow and less ice and fewer crevasses open, but descended a smugglers' path (one should know it) on scree and rock ; and reached the lower part of the Furgg glacier at 6.30 P.M., and the Schwarz-See hotel at 7.15 P.M. We stayed there till 8. P.M., and then, blundering down the path in the dark, reached the Monte Rosa hotel at 9.20 P.M.

One party was with us in the whole of the descent ; I think it was Mr. Stead's.

Next day, September 2, I found myself fairly fresh, but with tired muscles. In the afternoon we went up to the Riffelhaus and on to the Bétemps hut, which stands at

9190 feet, our objective now being the Lyskamm (14,889 feet). It was known that this mountain was for once free from cornice, or practically free ; and so I saw my opportunity of climbing it safely. I had never intended to try it, fearing the cornice. For this has been the death of more than one party. I remember that Roman Imboden, Joseph's son, said that he would never climb the Lyskamm because of the cornice ; ' it was gambling ' ; and he met his death through its treachery. We three formed a very congenial kind of party, in spite of the fact that the two guides were entirely ignorant of each other's language. This was really a drawback from the guiding point of view ; for rapid warnings or instructions given by one to the other were impossible when all had to be translated by me. Adolf, leading, would come to a doubtful snow bridge and shout '*Obacht!*' to Maurice. Maurice asks me : '*Que dit-il, Monsieur?*' I explain : '*Adolf veut dire "Attention!"*' Maurice.' All that takes time.

But socially all went well. Adolf knew that Maurice had recommended him, and there was much goodwill between them ; and as regards conversation, I had recently been having much practice in French-speaking, and for long had felt at home in German, so I rapidly translated ; and I even told them stories in alternate blocks of the two tongues ! Adolf too once told a story (I think it comes in Grimm), and I kept going a flying translation for Maurice's benefit. It was all very friendly.

On September 3, we set off at 3.15 A.M., up the Grenzletscher. We found the glacier decidedly bad, but saw what would be a better way for the return journey.

At 7.30 we had gained the main arête at a point where there were rocks ; they would be the last rocks on the arête touched by any one starting from the Lysjoch for

the Lyskamm. So we were near the Lysjoch, but above it in the direction of Lyskamm.

At this place we found a strange and gruesome object. It was what appeared to be the remains of a body. The guides told me that all the clothes were there, and that there was a frozen knapsack stuffed (it seemed) with paper or papers. The coat, they said, was silk-lined, so it could hardly be that of a smuggler. The skull and large bones, they said, were not there ; perhaps birds of prey had been at work. I was glad to remember that by Swiss law no body of a dead man must be touched by unauthorised persons ; so I could conscientiously keep away from these melancholy remains. We reported in Zermatt what we had seen ; but I heard nothing more before I left. If these were in truth, as the guides thought, the remains of a man who had perished up there, the death must have occurred a long time ago—many years the guides thought.

At 8.30 we went on, and reached the summit at 9.35. In its then condition Lyskamm proved neither difficult nor dangerous ; and old steps in the ice helped us much. At the top we sang a trio to the tune of 'God save the King,' which is also the Swiss national air. I sang our words, Adolf the Swiss (in German), and Maurice some French words which I think were in praise of his own Canton of Valais. It was a lovely day, and altogether no climb could have gone off more pleasantly ; we all felt very happy. We left the top at 10.15, and reached our sacks again on the rocks at 11. After an hour's halt there we descended, and reached the hut at 3 P.M. We had a long halt there, and did not get to Zermatt until 6.45 P.M. I was surprised to find myself remarkably fresh.

Next day (September 4) in the afternoon we went up to the Trift inn, Captain Knox coming also with his two guides ;

we were all bound for the traverse of the Ober-Gabelhorn. We left the inn next day (September 5) at 4.10 A.M., and halted high up on the Gabelhorn glacier at 7.30 A.M. for food.

The actual climb is mainly up a rock rib, and is quite safe when you are there ; but you have to run the gauntlet of falling stones in getting from the glacier on to this rib. Indeed, we took care, when choosing our breakfast place, to keep well away from the foot of the rib. For the stones that fall carry far, as we saw in the course of our halt. However, the risk had to be run ; and, setting off at 8.15 A.M., we reached our rocks safely at 8.40 A.M.

The first summit, that which I had reached in 1893 with Franz Anthamatten and the other guide, was gained at 9.55 A.M. [See p. 111.]

This time the dip between the two summits was clear of snow, and the second, or highest, summit proved to be only ten minutes further on. There we had an enjoyable halt until 11.30. It is a magnificent peak to be on ; and with the Matterhorn opposite, and the Dent Blanche, Weisshorn, Monte Rosa, and all the other giants of the Valais about one, it can be imagined that the view is grand. Then we descended the arête towards the Arbjoeh.

It would be out of place to describe here the route down ; so I will only say that the first and steeper part gave some good rock climbing, while the rest, and by far the greater part of the descent, was rather a matter of knowing the way.

It was 2.20 when we reached the upper part of the Arben glacier, and there we halted for some three quarters of an hour. At 3.40 we were on the lower Arben glacier, and we unroped and left it at 4.15 P.M. A leisurely descent into and down the Z'mutt valley brought us to Zermatt at

6.15 P.M. ; one more entirely successful day. I will note here that I was very favourably impressed with one of Captain Knox's guides, Joseph Lochmatter.

There had been one cloud to shadow these last fourteen days, that being my late companion's inability to share them all with me. But when I found what a successful time he had the next season, the cloud was removed ; and the summer remains now as one of the happiest of my Swiss memories.

The Wetterhorn, Schreckhorn, traverse (in a sense) of the Finsteraarhorn ; the Lötschenlücke, Bietschhorn, and traverse of the Matterhorn ; the Lyskamm and traverse of the Ober-Gabelhorn—what a concentration of glorious life into one fortnight ! I shall never have the like again.

. . . Beyond, a line of heights, and higher  
All barr'd with long white cloud, the scornful crags,  
And highest, snow and fire.



## CHAPTER XVI

Will thirty seasons render plain  
Those lonely lights that still remain  
Just breaking over land and main ?

Cry, faint not, climb ; the summits slope  
Beyond the furthest flights of hope  
Wrapt in dense cloud from base to cope.

*Tennyson.*

## THE SWISS END OF THE MONT BLANC GROUP—

## WANDERINGS, 1907

AND now I come to what is, as I write in the beginning of 1910, my last year in the mountains.

I do not think that there can be a much stranger experience than this of going over old diaries. And the curious thing about it is, that the further back the year and the less vivid and lifelike the record that one can put on paper for the public, the stronger is the stirring of memories of all that is of most interest to oneself.

The new naval scheme of education (that startling thunderbolt out of the blue sky !) rang the knell of our college at Devonport, and July 28, 1907, saw me free, after twenty-seven years of teaching.

It was not long before I found my way to Switzerland once more ; and on August 3, I left the diligence at Grengiols to walk to Binn. It must, I think, have been on this occasion (for I don't think that I ever walked this way before) that I was brought into close contact with one of those avalanche disasters of which there are so many records.

I had read of some 'fatal avalanche' near Grengiols, and I now came to a place where there was evidence of it in the aspect of the hillside above, in the ruined path and vanished bridge, and in the remnants of chalets. Some men were working at the path. I asked one of them if there had been human lives lost. 'Thirteen' (I think he said). 'He' (pointing to another worker) 'lost *six* relatives.' Looking up, I wondered why this place had ever been considered safe; for the region above seemed made for discharging avalanches. But here, I believe, the Swiss go by facts and not likelihoods; and I suppose that avalanches had never fallen there before within man's memory.

Now of Binn, and the guideless climbs and rounds to be made there, I have already written enough, and more than enough. I will pass on to some three weeks' later when Legh Powell, Brushfield, Hope, and I found ourselves at the little 'Châlet du Val Ferret' with Mont Dolent towering above us to the west, and the Col d'Argentière and the Tour Noir within our reach.

I cannot recommend our inn. Sanitation was unknown, there was not even a foot-bath to be had, and the food was bad. The worst of all was that we suffered from vomiting and diarrhoea to such an extent that metallic poisoning was suggested; I suspected the cooking vessels, which were of untinned brass. We only threw off these painful ailments when we had a long day out and ate no food cooked in the house. All of us (save Powell) were in hard condition when we arrived, having already been out for some weeks. I am sorry to run down any inn; but facts are facts. Were I to visit the valley again I should certainly try a new place that was even then being built at the mouth of the valley that leads to the Col d'Argentière, at or near the 'La

Fouly' of the maps. But it is only fair to say that competition frequently has a beneficial effect; and that our little inn *may* now be better.

Our first two expeditions were not of much interest; but we found that the Grand Golliaz must *not* be climbed by way of the Col des Angroniettes. We also found [one of the party to his cost, and with results that might well have been still more serious] that it is not easy to make a standing glissade on a couloir of hard snow when the gradient is such that the *head* of the axe must be used as a brake. Only Hope performed this feat successfully; it seemed to be quite easy to him.

On August 26, we set off at 3.30 A.M. for the Col d'Argentière, with latent designs on the Tour Noir. In the illustration the heights seem much dwarfed by their distance. The Tour Noir (12,546 feet) is the high point somewhat to the left; the 'buttress,' spoken of on p. 190, is seen down below it; and the Col d'Argentière is on the high ridge to the left of the summit, and is *not* the dip to the right.

I guided to the top of the col; and discovered that the way up the middle of the glacier which I had followed earlier in the season in 1897 and in 1901 was not the best now. It would have been better to have reached the (true) left bank of the *Neuva glacier*, and then to have crossed the ice and to have sloped up obliquely over snow to the buttress or arête spoken of before. However, we gained our buttress safely, and then were secure from falling stones.

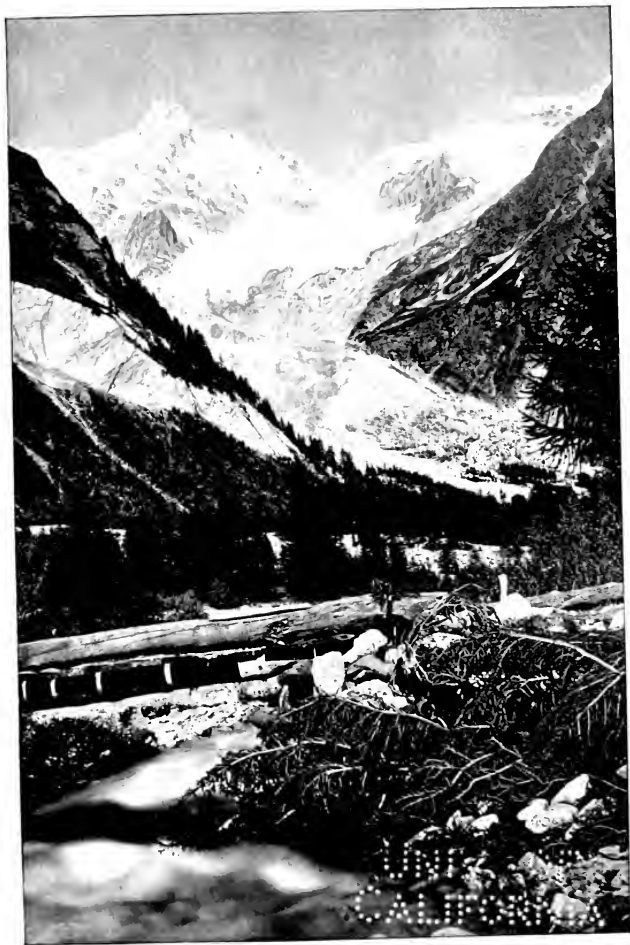
Powell found himself not yet in his usual Swiss condition, and so we pursued the wiser course of going very slowly and having good halts. Hence we did not reach the col until 2.10 P.M.

Hope, the untiring, proposed that he should guide me up the Tour Noir, as he knew the way. I had started in a sick and poisoned condition, but had worked all this off and felt very well. Powell was quite content to wait for us.

So Hope and I actually set off at 2.20 P.M. from the col. It is a dramatic climb. After following the arête from the col for some way, you pass on to the tremendous cliffs that face (more or less) the east; and there is a long traverse on this huge wall of rock on very small ledges. This traverse, which had one bit in the middle that required great care in the descent, was followed by a short climb that seemed nearly vertical and was decidedly 'exposed'; in fact it was, I think, the ascent of a steep chimney mainly outside it—if that is intelligible. After this we were practically at the summit.

What added to the impressiveness of this climb was that we went up without using the rope. This probably made us quicker, as there were no waitings of one for the other, and no entanglements; and we reached the top at 3.40, having taken one hour and twenty minutes from the col. We could have stayed a long time there with much content, it is such a fine place. But at that hour in the day the twenty-five minutes that we gave ourselves was a long time.

Of the view what can I write? All views are grand in this group of striking, I might say terrific, mountain forms. To descend we did rope. Hope nursed me down the steep piece, and then descended quickly on the doubled rope, employing a dodge (what dodges are there that he does *not* know?) shown him, I think he said, by Simond of Montanvert. The rope was twisted round his leg, and I held the other end. By tightening or relaxing at his word



THE TÔLE NOIR FROM THE VAL D'ARRE.

76-1000  
ABRACCLIAO

of command I could regulate the friction to suit him ; and he slid down without any strain on the hands or arms ; his puttees protected his leg.

We reached the col at 5.10 P.M., one hour and five minutes from the top. We set off at 5.20 P.M.

On reconnoitring from above, we decided (very wisely) on altering the lower part of the route. When we had descended the arête (buttress, or rib) as far as it can be used, instead of descending in our old tracks we struck off more to north, north-east, and then east. I have noted this as ' more or less in the line 2974 and 2764 of the Swiss Siegfried map, so leaving the Neuva glacier on its left bank, making for the Essettes, and then descending to the moraine just above a rock head that divides it into two portions ; instead of following our up-route, which lay past 2900 and 2663.'

Again we were slow, and only left the glacier at 8 P.M. There was no moon yet. In the dark, later on, we came south on ' Essettes ' too soon, and got among rocks. It was impossible to see without a lantern, and, with it, shadows and holes were indistinguishable. After some prospecting that was not devoid of risk we decided to wait for the moon.

Hope, the resourceful, has reduced mountain outfit to an exact science, as a paper of his in the *Alpine Journal* proves. He goes very lightly burdened, and yet can prepare buttered eggs or cocoa on the remotest mountain peak ; and he even has an aluminium plate that clips on to his knee and enables him to eat as at a table in any place where he can sit down.

So we hung a lantern on to an axe, and sat down to a hot supper. I had thought that *I* was rather dodgy ; but a few days with Hope showed me that I had everything to learn.

But I think he will agree that it is carrying things too far to have aluminium crampons. Looking at his kit, I could not but think of Cockin, who used to carry walking boots with him in the place of knapsack slippers.

When the moon gave us light we moved on, but did not reach the inn until 1.30 at night. It seems that Brushfield had strolled, late, down the path, and had seen our lantern; and this had been rightly interpreted by him, so that he ceased to be anxious about us. He, poor man, having had brass in every meal (?), had had much nausea. I had my turn next day when we all rested; and the beneficial effects of the day out were cancelled.

On August 28, Brushfield and Hope both left; I arranged luggage, and Powell made up plans. He had begun rather too vigorously, and we intended now to go on quietly.

August 29 was not fine. Nevertheless, in the afternoon we found our way over the very mild 'Col des Planards' to Bourg St. Pierre. When we reached the St. Bernard route in the dark and in rain we ran into a silent figure; it was a Swiss soldier or gendarme on customs' duty. Fancy having to potter about there on such a night!

We went to the old inn at B. St. Pierre. All there is nice save the sanitation; but one really *could* not stay there. It is such a pity that there is this fatal flaw in so many of the simpler places. Very often the *salle à manger* itself is tainted. I wish that a society of Swiss doctor-missionaries could go round and improve things. It is such a pity that one cannot stay in these places until they have modern hotels in them—*i.e.* until they are known and no longer unspoilt and primitive.

On August 30, we went along the St. Bernard route and found a new little inn called the 'Hôtel Grand Combin.'



That was very inexpensive and the food was nice ; but there was the same weak point.

Powell's plan of campaign took us next to the Val d'Ollomont.

So on August 31, we set out at 5.10 A.M. with our sacks to find and to cross the Col de Valsorey. This lies between the main mass of the Grand Combin group and a portion of it, of which the chief summit is the Mont Velan, that projects towards the south-west. It leads from Bourg St. Pierre to the Italian valley of Ollomont. The actual col is at the point marked 3113 (or about 10,200 feet above the sea) in the Siegfried map. For my part, directly I saw this col I was dismayed. It was clearly a pass to be taken earlier in the season, for the same reason that the Hüllehorn (near Binn) is a mountain to be climbed early in the season (see p. 214). With good snow, covering and adherent to the ice, and covering and holding fast the loose stones and rocks, it would be easy enough. As it now was, it was horrid.

To go straight up the glacier towards the col (as it says in the guide-book) now meant more step cutting than we could undertake, and we should be exposed to falling stones all the time.

An alternative route was to go up snow slopes to our left (but the true right) of the ice-fall, under the cliffs of the Luisettes ; to gain a patch of rotten rocks ; and then to traverse the ice-fall high up to some easy snow that then led to the col.

It was evident that the whole thing was very dangerous, and we, sober middle-aged men, ought to have rejected it at once and turned back.

But even middle-aged men can be obstinate in carrying out plans ; and even in them survives something of the

imprudence of young climbers, only too easily stirred into life again by opposition. So, inexcusable though it was, we settled to go.

We ascended the snow slopes covered with fallen stones and splashed all over with holes made by others that had descended in leaps (and some of these holes were great pits) ; and made up for the rock patch. We had much cutting of steps under fire while we did this. We then cast about for a way across the ice ; and, after one abortive attempt, we decided to make for a half-choked crevasse, one end of which reached the snow by which we could gain the col, and the other end seemed not so very far from our side of the ice.

As we cut across towards it stones slid down from above, luckily missing us, and bigger rocks threatened to come ; a slight drizzle making this danger far greater. To our right the ice fell steeply, and to a horrid depth ; one knock-out would have done for us. We took two hours to cut steps across. I have never felt such a nervous strain as this was.

At last we reached the crevasse ; and it was curious how safe we felt. We could still be hit ; but we could no longer be sent down that horrible ice slope.

I have indicated pretty clearly how unwise we were. But those days are over now ; and I put down all in this record, successes, mistakes, and follies, so long as there is some interest in it. We reached the col at 1.50.

I learned later that when the conditions are bad, as they were when we crossed the pass, guides make a detour up the flanks of the Mont de la Gouille, and thus avoid the stone-swept slopes of snow and ice.

On the other side of the col there was no glacier ; it was all walking. There is much interest in visiting these little-

known valleys ; and it was always when with Powell that my knowledge of ' Little-known Switzerland ' was extended. This valley, however, was, in point of fact, Italian.

We reached Ollomont at 6 P.M., and put up at the Hôtel Velan. It was rather a surprise to be addressed at once in voluble and *very* nasal American. Our hostess was another returned emigrant.

All was nice there save the sanitation ; but that was a fatal blot.

After a day's rest we set off at 5.40 A.M. on September 2 for the St. Bernard hospice. We first passed into the Meneuve valley over an easy col. As we made our way up this valley in mist and a drizzle towards a second pass called the Col de Meneuve, we came across two ill-clad and damp natives outside a hovel of some kind. One of these addressed us in American, and told us that he was out with a friend for a day's *pleasure*, marmot shooting. No doubt conscious of his appearance, he took pains to impress on us the fact that he had returned rich from America, and had no need to work ; he had built a beautiful house in the village below.

The passage of the Col de Meneuve took us to the St. Bernard route and to the hospice.

So, after just twenty years, I saw this hospice again. There had been changes. The old mortuary and dog-house had disappeared, and in their place a huge new block of buildings, designed to hold visitors, confronted the old block that I knew. The monks were in some stir when we came ; and I saw two (or one ?) very well appointed motors, and men in livery, waiting outside. It turned out that the Queen of Italy was in the hospice. She went off very soon after, and we saw all the signatures left behind in the visitors' book, the Queen's leading off. In spite of

this preoccupation, the very urbane monk who looks after guests took us at once to a room. It was the very same room that Heaton and I had occupied twenty years before ; unless there are other rooms that contain pictures of Queen Victoria and the (then) Prince of Wales.

In one respect the hospice had not changed : there was the same deadly chill about it.

Next day we set off in mist and some cold rain for the, or rather for *a*, Col de Fenêtre that would take us back to the Ferret inn.

We had an interesting bit of guideless work in the mist, getting on to quite the wrong col at first, and setting ourselves right by use of the map and compass.

The Ferret inn was reached ; and the same evening found us up at Champez.

This is a beautiful place. But I must fear the effect on the purity of the water of the lake that will be produced by the rapid increase in numbers of hotels and visitors that is going on.

On September 5, Powell and I went off from Champez to the Cabane d'Orny. Next day we made a leisurely start at 6.30 A.M., and reached the top of the Aiguille du Tour (11,585) at 9.45.

It is a fine view that one gets from there, the sister summit close at hand, the Aiguilles Dorées of fantastic form, the Grande Fourche, the Aiguille du Chardonnet being among the features of it ; and the ascent is remarkably easy. It is only on the ice above the bergschrund that anything could happen amiss ; and when this is in bad condition (and I have seen water and mud and small stones sliding down all the time and filling up the steps), the small four-spiked crampons are a great comfort in descent.

I do not think any mountain group of the Alps can rival the Mont Blanc group in grandeur and picturesqueness. And not only this, but you get so much variety, the scene changing with your centre. To those familiar with Montanvert above Chamonix, this Swiss end of the range, accessible from Champez, will be quite new country. The huge Aiguilles d'Argentière and du Chardonnet are magnificent mountain masses unlike those seen elsewhere in the group; while the Aiguilles Dorées rival the celebrated Aiguilles of Chamonix, and are strikingly individual in form. Probably any geologist could throw much light on the matter.

Our next aim was the ascent of the Grande Fourche (11,867 feet); and we had decided to find that way up on the south-westerly face of which we had read in *Kurz's Guide*.

We passed over the Fenêtre de Salcinaz from the 'Plateau du Trient,' which is the upper part of the Glacier du Trient, on to the Glacier de Salcinaz, circuited round the base of the mountain, and had our south-west face before us. Of our first attempt, which led us off on to another side of the mountain, I will not speak.

We finally ascended the face up a sort of broad gulley, then covered with soft and somewhat avalanchy snow, which we judged to be reasonably safe. At the top of this we came to excellent firm rock, and had a most interesting climb to the top. The actual summit was formed by a curious flat rock, apparently balanced (firmly) on a narrower base; a sort of mushroom-like growth. On to this we hoisted ourselves, and thoroughly enjoyed a rest and the view. The most striking features in this last were certainly the Aiguilles d'Argentière and du Chardonnet, mighty masses quite close to us; but there was much else to delight the eye.

I somewhat mistrusted the snow of our couloir, as the day was more advanced and the snow less firm ; but all went well, and the descent did *not* end in an involuntary glissade in the company of an avalanche.

Tea at the Cabane d'Orny en route (how delightful was that halt!), and Champez once more reached at 8 P.M. Our two days had been most successful.

Our next move was to the Saleinaz cabane, a fresh starting point.

So after a Sunday's rest we went off to Praz de Fort in the Val Ferret below, hired a porter to carry some of our things, and set off for the Saleinaz hut. Just before you get to the rocks on which it stands, you cross a wilderness of stones that have come down from above. As we were beginning to cross, we heard a noise, and saw quantities of big stones bounding down steep ice above and raking our route. Of course the only thing was to get across, in a lull, as quickly as one could. I shall hardly be believed when I relate that our porter sat down to rest in the very midst of the track of the avalanche that we had just witnessed. And after all, he was only carrying a rucksack of provisions, not a heavy load.

It took us four hours to get up to the hut. We found it a very good one, but the water-supply was inadequate—a weak point.

Next day (September 10) we set off at 6.35 A.M. with the intention of climbing the Grand Darrei should there prove to be not too much step cutting.

Of this day I need only relate that, after a good try, ice and falling stones drove us back from the Grand Darrei ; and that we then went up the Petit Darrei.

The day following we set off at 7.10 A.M. (cleaning up took some time), with full sacks, to traverse the Portalet.

A few days before we had stood at the Cabane d'Orny and had seen this mountain opposite, presenting to us a steep face. In the main this face was of mixed rock, ice, and snow, and at the bottom was a short ice slope cut by a bergschrund; we suspected it of being stone-swept. But to the left, as we faced it, was a solid rock buttress, that might possibly afford a safer way down.

We proposed to reach the top from the Saleinaz side, and to descend to the Cabane d'Orny. We went by the Col de Pines route to the foot of the mountain, reaching this at 10.10. An easy and uninteresting walk up brought us to the top (10,991 feet) at 10.52, and we enjoyed the view, rested, and had a meal, leaving at 11.30. The descent on to the d'Orny glacier was another matter!

The face below us did not look nice in its then condition; for there was much ice between the rocks, and many of these seemed loose; we did not, moreover, enjoy the prospect of cutting steps down the hard ice above the bergschrund at the bottom, under possible fire from stones. So we made off to the buttress (to our right in descent) spoken of above.

We gained this, and were really, I believe, on the right way. But after some hesitation we finally went back on to the face, descended it without accident, and reached the d'Orny glacier by a gulley down which so much debris of all sorts *had* fallen that the bergschrund below it was choked and bridged.

Later on a guide indicated to me the way down by the buttress route; but I should say that earlier in the year, with good snow to give footing and to bind the stones, the face would 'go' very well.

We reached the Cabane d'Orny at 3.30 P.M., and again enjoyed our halt for tea. It had been another successful day.

[Let me in passing recommend, as food and stimulant after hard work, good China tea mixed with plenty of the sweetened Nestle's milk.] Champez was reached in good time.

A few days later, Powell and I went to the Hôtel Combin just outside Bourg St. Pierre. We intended to prospect ; to find out the Col de Sonadon route, for one thing.

Could sanitation-missionaries but do their work, what a pleasant place Bourg St. Pierre would be to stay at for the ordinary English family of the genuine mountain-loving kind ! The scenery is beautiful, picturesque, and varied. Walks abound ; and we found plenty of wild strawberries, raspberries, and even currants, as well as whortleberries. And though glaciers are not near, there are a few big expeditions to be made—the Grand Combin and Mont Velan, for example.

Bad weather now came on, and we could do nothing. At last it did clear up ; but the new snow had rendered the mountains impracticable, and our one exploring day was a reconnoitring expedition, with the Col de Sonadon as its object. This pass takes you over from the Val d'Entremont, up which runs the St. Bernard route, to the Val de Bagnes. You branch off at Bourg St. Pierre from the main valley up the Valsorey valley, mount the Glacier de Sonadon, and descend the Durand glacier to near Chanrion ; the pass thus lying south of the Grand Combin.

The particular difficulty of this col occurs in one place. On the Valsorey side there is a sudden fall in the Sonadon glacier ; you cannot climb up it, and so are obliged to circumvent it.

To do this there are two ways open to you. One is to mount the south flank of the 'Combin de Valsorey,' and so pass high above the awkward fall in the glacier on its north



side. The other is to keep close up to the fall, but to pass it by ascending a gulley or chimney also on its north side. It was this last way that we inspected, since the higher route, up on the mountain's flank, was deep in new and unsettled snow.

I inspected the chimney from a safe place where I was quite close to it and about on a level with its mid-ascent ; and I did not like it ! Stones and snow came down as I watched ; and it was clearly something of a 'rubbish-shoot.'

Of course the conditions at the time were particularly bad ; but I should say that in any case this gulley must be dangerous ; and I feel sure that the first route, high up over the flanks of the mountain, must be far the best. If the chimney route be chosen, the route from the hut, which strikes it half way up and so makes the risk less, should be taken instead of the older route which comes up more by the side of the lower Glacier de Sonadon and strikes the chimney at the bottom ; you get less of this exposure to stones. [*Remark.*—The above gives the result of our reconnoitring for what it is worth. I do not pretend to know this col.]

The weather now turned fine ; but Powell's time was up. He left for England on September 18, and I returned to Champez.

All looked lovely at this latter place ; but the past bad weather appeared to have driven every one away, and any wandering that I did would evidently have to be companionless.

On September 19, I set off at 7.30 A.M. up the Val d'Arpette. I gained the Fenêtre d'Arpette at 10.50 A.M., and had a halt of an hour, making my midday meal and looking about me.

Making a traverse to the left I gained the Glacier du Trient, and, avoiding the easier snow that lined the side, lest stones from the cliffs should hit me, I ascended the slippery ice further out by the help of my convenient little four-spiked crampons.

Leaving on my left the way up to the Col d'Ecandies (a col that lies, I should say, more truly at the head of the Val d'Arpette ; the Fenêtre d'Arpette, by which I had come, being somewhat to one side), I went to inspect an ice-fall that led to the upper levels of the Glacier du Trient, *i.e.* to the Plateau du Trient ; for I had some idea of trying to reach the Cabane d'Orny by the glacier and so returning to Champez by another route. It seemed to me that in July, with more snow, this might be easy. But now I found the ice-fall much broken ; and, what was worse, the one practicable route for me would be up a hollow way in the ice that was clearly a stone-shoot. Further, I could not see what was beyond ; and I guessed (as I believe was the case) that much stone-threatened ice of considerable inclination lay up above. So, after staying longer than was desirable in a region that was evidently somewhat dangerous, I gave up this plan and in about ten minutes reached the Col d'Ecandies.

Circuiting round on the other side of this I spent an hour in seeing whether it was worth while trying to reach the upper level of the Glacier du Trient by a high col that lay more to the southerly ; I think it was the Col du Chamois. But it was not a nice way up, and stones fell here also ; so I turned.

In the higher part of this Val d'Arpette there are very remarkable moraine-like ridges of stones. I was inclined to think that they were not true moraines (see p. 163), but due to debris fallen directly from the cliffs ; not glacier-

carried. But I hope to visit the place again and see if I can make more out about them.

On Friday, September 20, I went off for what proved to be a somewhat strange experience.

I went up alone to the Cabane d'Orny, to climb again the Aiguille du Tour. There I made tea and gave some to a very pleasant young Frenchman and his guide. Then they left, and I was alone.

I sat down to write and to read while yet all was bright and warm, and hardly noticed how the time went. But when I had done, I found it very chill. The sun had gone down behind the glacier, and frost had set in. So I closed the door, made up the fire, and cooked oatmeal soup and eggs. Darkness came on ; but it was not until I had finished my meal that I became aware of a somewhat singular sense of oppression. I considered ; and at last was compelled to recognise that I, a middle-aged man, used to living alone, was suffering under the weight of silence and solitude. One hears no stream there ; the indistinguishable sounds that fill the air, even in the country, at home, were absent ; no birds twittered or moved, no leaves whispered, no distant cart rumbled. The Cabane d'Orny is remote from all sources of sound. Only, once and again, a stone fell, or the glacier gave one of its uncanny grunts.

When I was a small boy, a friend of my brother used to tell us ghost stories in a darkened room ; I can hear still his '*Clank, clank*' as he described the ascent of a fettered skeleton from the cellar, heard, in an agony of terror, by a lonely watcher in his room above. No wonder that I used to slink up-stairs with my back to the wall, and undress in a corner of the room ; the final rush into bed being made in a panic of undefined fear. What then

strained my nerves almost beyond endurance was the dread of what might be *behind* me.

I got older and more self-controlled ; yet still I feared, not so much ghosts, as a sudden rush of vivid pictures of what might be behind me, a rush that for the time might sweep my reasoning powers away. How I remembered one ghastly picture of Hogarth's (that horrible dissection of the 'Idle Apprentice') ; one unpardonable allegory ; Lytton's 'Dweller on the Threshold' in *Zanoni* ; and another tale of fear that he wrote (I think it came as an appendix to the *Strange Story*) ; pictures in an old book of illustrations of the *Pilgrim's Progress* ; ghastly spectres in Retsch's illustrations of *Faust* and other poems ; —horrors in delineation that taint my memory even now. When I was sixteen I used to fish up in Exmoor until light failed ; I had no fear of panic in the open. Woods were different ; and if the wood contained the deserted dwellings of man, it was a strain to my nerves to come home through it. This was, as I said, not a real fear of things supernatural, but rather a fear of a sudden haunting of the mind.

Well, one cannot have a childhood and boyhood so haunted without retaining some traces of it. And here in this absolutely silent hut (a dwelling of man, not the free mountains), so utterly remote from living men, a weight pressed upon me and I felt something of my old fear of panic move within me ; I had to keep a certain hold over myself ; the effort was not great, but it was perceptible. I remembered a story of an Indian hunter who was racing starvation home through the frozen wilds of Canada in winter ; how, as he sat by his fire at night, he heard a weird lost cry afar off ; and then one night the cry neared him and a gaunt figure of a long-dead hunter came and sat

down on the other side of the fire; no more sleep for the living man. I remembered how a winter guardian of the Schwarenbach, whose companion got lost, went mad in solitude.

Was that a knock at the door? Would some dead chamois-hunter stalk in and sit silent by the stove? This would never do! My mind had gone back some thirty-five years, and I was beginning, just beginning, to forget how old and prosaic I really was. So I wrote and read again, and then went to bed.

The next morning's sun brought wholesome life and common sense back again, and I could hardly believe that those feelings of eeriness had crept near me and tried to grip me the night before.

At 7.30 I set off for the Aiguille du Tour. I may here say that I knew what I was doing. The track over the covered glacier was well worn, the snow cover but thin, and the few crevasses were fairly straight-sided; there was no doubt as to where these crevasses lay, and all I had to do was to sound for them, and to choose my way more carefully than if I was on a rope. I reached the bergschrund at 9.45. Above this, the ice was not good; water, sand, and gravel flowed over it. I reached the rocks at 10.5, and the summit at 10.20. My halt of forty minutes up there was very enjoyable.

Coming down, I used crampons on the ice, and these were certainly needed, since the flowing sand, etc., disguised the steps. I never forget that a fall which maims may in the end prove as fatal as a fall which kills; and a slow death is worse than a sudden one. It does not do to be careless because the depth below one is after all not very great.

I reached the cabane at 12.40 and had a pleasant time

there, with tea, a book, and my writing materials. Setting off at 3.15 I reached Champez at 5.30 or so.

Being desirous to do something harder with a guide, I was once more rather rash, as I was when left alone at Arolla in 1905. For I agreed with a Swiss climber from Lausanne to share a guide with him for some of the Aiguilles Dorées. However, this time the venture turned out well.

On September 22, then, my Swiss companion and I ascended to the Dupuis hut with the guide Adrien Crettez. This last was a sturdy young fellow (under thirty at any rate), evidently very strong in body, and with a prepossessing face, frank and courageous. It seems strange that the Swiss Alpine Club should have built a second hut so near to the Cabane d'Orny. The Dupuis hut is higher up, perched on an eminence ; and it was *very* cold there.

On September 23 we set off at 6.10 A.M. We reached the bergschrund at the foot of the Aiguilles Dorées range at 6.45, and were on the arête at a low point some five minutes later.

We turned along the arête towards the west, keeping at first on its south side. All was good rock, and the climbing well within our powers ; no 'nursing' on the part of the guide was needed. We were making for the Tête Biselx (11,533 feet) ; and, before long, we passed the Aiguille Javelle with its well-known chimney.

On the way to the Tête Biselx there was one part that I did not like ; viz., the ascent of a sort of shoulder of hard ice. Were this firm snow, as it might be earlier in the season, it would be nothing. But I never have liked steep ice-steps cut far apart ; the descent of such is trying, the balance being difficult ; the axe will not hold.

And when one is middle-aged and getting stiff !

We reached the summit of our rock-pinnacle at 8.40 A.M.,

and stayed for a whole hour there, enjoying ourselves much.

In descending the steep ice-steps, I chipped hand-holds for myself, and I think my Swiss companion was very glad to have them. It was remarkable to see the careless ease with which Adrien Crettez descended.

Arrived once more at the foot of the Aiguille Javelle (11,280 feet), my companion expressed a wish to go up. I saw at once that the thing was quite beyond my powers, and that I should have to rely entirely on the rope. I think the chimney (which is a real chimney between two columns of rock, and not one of those corners so often called chimneys), is reckoned to be some seventy to eighty feet high; our guide called it 'twenty-five metres.' There are no real holds; a man has to wedge his way up; and it seemed to me that in three places it was quite possible to fall outwards.

We halted for food at the foot from 10.40 to 11.25. Then Adrien went up, taking with him the rope, now detached from us. It was exhausting work even for him; and he stopped at short intervals to rest, panting hard. My companion was next lugged up; and then the rope came down again for me. The climb *was* quite beyond my powers; I suspect that my fifty-two years had something to do with this! But I do not think that any guide would care to lead up this chimney and come down it last unless he knew it and was young and a very good rock-climber. It is distinctly a 'fancy-climb.'

Well; I have been to the top; but I certainly did not climb there, and I do not feel proud of the performance!

We reached the top of this so-called Aiguille (a mere bâton of rock) at 12.10, stayed till 12.45, and were down in a quarter of an hour.

The glacier was gained at 1.45 and the hut at 2.15. Tea there was delightful ; I felt perfectly fresh after it.

Then two and a quarter hours saw us back at Champez.

The climb on the Aiguilles Dorées brought my summer to an end ; my last summer, up to the present time, of mountaineering in the Alps.

In February 1909—summer in those latitudes—I spent three weeks in the heart of the Andes ; but of my experiences there I cannot write in this book.

I will therefore conclude by first giving some of the results of my studies of inscriptions, and then a brief account of my doings in the later autumn of 1907 and the winter of 1907-8.



## CHAPTER XVII

Their names, their years, spelt by th' unlettered Muse,  
The place of fame and elegy supply :  
And many a holy text around she strews,  
That teach the rustic moralist to die.

*Thomas Gray.*

## INSRIPTIONS CUT ON THE CHALET'S

IN 1899 I began collecting House-inscriptions ; but it was not until 1907-1908 that I set about it in earnest, the leisure that I then had, and the discovery of the enormous advantages gained by using binoculars, causing the work to advance much more rapidly and satisfactorily.

It was pathetic to see how little interest the present inhabitants of the chalets took in the records that grandparents and great-grandparents had carved ; for the chalets appeared to stay in the same family always. Sometimes a name would strike them—'Stegger? Yes ; I remember my grandfather saying that *his* mother's name was Stegger.' But the spark of interest usually died out, and the apathy of the overworked and underfed, hard-struggling, mountain folk fell on them again.

*Where found.*—Not everywhere did I find these inscriptions ; in fact it was mainly in the Bernese Oberland. In Adelboden and near it they were very common, and were found even on stalls for cattle, and on the little store-houses (*Speicher*) where grain or cheeses were kept.

*Limitations in choice.*—For obvious reasons I limited myself (with one exception) to outside inscriptions ; one was so much freer then. Further, I kept to those that were cut, not painted. The painted inscriptions were usually in black letters on a white ground ; and it was so often the case that important parts were entirely wiped away (in the spring cleanings?) that I gave up attempting to decipher them—it was heart-breaking work. When entirely left alone, painted inscriptions of great age would be left in faint relief, the paint having preserved the wood ; but even these were unsatisfactory.

*Weathering.*—Taking the ordinary chalet-front, with its projecting eaves and sloping roof, one may say that even after three hundred years the parts of the inscriptions that were to some extent sheltered by the eaves would be still fairly clear and sharp. But the wood on the more exposed part of the face would be black and converted on the surface into a mass of delicate laminae, in which the old cut letters appeared faintly like shadows. In some cases you could have flattened down or rubbed away the whole top layer, letters and all, with the gloved hand. Inscriptions cut under a verandah, and well sheltered, would be perfectly sharp.

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*Characters used.*—I found that in general inscriptions cut earlier than 1660 would be entirely in Roman capitals, or in contracted forms of these (devised to economise work in cutting); and that those cut later than 1740 would be in German characters—often of very fanciful forms. Between these dates one might find parts in one style and parts in another; and sometimes the initial letters were German and the rest Roman capitals. A curious influence of German on Roman lettering was seen in the very common use of  $\bar{N}$  for U (or rather for V when this meant U).

The Roman-charactered inscriptions were on the whole relatively easy to read, as the letters were not fantastic. But they involved many horizontal strokes, which the horizontal splitting of the wood disguised; so that T, E, F, L, I might look much alike. And further, they were nearly always written unspaced, with dots to separate the words; and these dots were often victims of the weathering, so that a mere string of letters was left.

In one style of German (or Gothic?) character all curves were avoided as far as possible; hence manow, were there such a word, would look very like twelve equidistant strokes.

*Not broken into verses.*—Only quite modern inscriptions were broken into verses; older ones always ran on continuously.

*Spelling.*—P and B, D and T, were often interchanged respectively; and it seemed a toss up in many cases whether *i* or *ei* were used—the sounds were, moreover, taken as rhyming. Again, I saw *dei* used for *die*, *leidig* (painful) for *ledig* (unmarried), and so on. Constant observation and comparison inevitably gave me in the end some skill; and so I *knew*, and did not *guess*, that PREID meant BREIT (= *Bereite*), PHND meant BHUT (= *Behüte*), EILENGREMER meant IE · LENG · E · MER (= *je länger je mehr*),<sup>1</sup> and so on.

*Names.*—As regards the proper names, I always, in cases of doubt, consulted the inhabitants of the houses, or the well-educated hotel people who belonged to the valley. Such help was essential. I thus learned that CALER meant ZALER—(and I found CIDTIG for *zeitig*, meaning *zeitlich*, in the same inscription); that *Anen*, *Inebnit*, *von Siebenthal*, were well-known family names in the villages in which they occurred in the inscriptions; that *Gwer* was a common Christian name (short for Cyrenius, or Quirinius); and so on.

*My limitations in reproducing the inscriptions.*—Consideration of expense in printing forbid the reproduction of contracted (*i.e.* combined) Roman characters, as well as of those that were reversed, or even merely

<sup>1</sup> I am indebted to Herr Ed. Hoffmann-Krayer, editor of a folklore journal published in Basel, for this suggestion in the first place. But, once made, my own experience showed me that it was entirely in accordance with the modes of spelling (*ei* for *ie*, *lengr* for *länger*, *mer* for *mehr*) to be found in some of the older inscriptions.

It was unfamiliarity with this German phrase itself that had prevented me from thinking of the right interpretation.

inverted; and the fantastic German characters with their flourishes cannot be attempted. So I have been obliged to limit myself to plain Roman characters on the one hand, and ordinary German type on the other, not retaining even pure inversions where these occur.

*The functions of the persons named.*—Here I had to go by comparison and induction; not even educated Swiss could help me. I may mention the fact that the editor of a Swiss folklore journal did not even know the word *Wandknecht* (which occurs on houses without number); he said that the word was not given in the recognised dictionary of patois. The villagers, however, knew it. When it is said that a house is '*Gebauen*, or *Erbauen*, durch A and B,' or when A and B are said to *bauen*, or *bauen lassen* (in patois *lan bauen*), a house, then A and B are the owners, and paid for it. But to *machen* a house means to be its architect, or contractor, or master-carpenter.

The *Zimmermeister* measured everything out; he was master-carpenter; probably architect in the case of simple buildings. He was sometimes said to have *gemeistert* the house. I think that, in the inscriptions, even though incorrectly, *Hausmeister* was used for *Zimmermeister*, and not for master of the house.

The *Wandknechte* undoubtedly were skilled labourers, who fixed together the beams measured by the *Zimmermeister* and cut out by the *Zimmermann* (carpenter).

*Werkmeister* may have been *Zimmermeister*, or foreman, or contractor; *Baumeister* the same. *Bauherr* may have been owner, but I think he was very likely the same as *Baumeister*.

As I said; modern Swiss cannot be sure. They often gave me meanings that did not fit in with the inscriptions.

*Measures.*—Educated local people gave me 150 cubic decimetres as the value of a *müth*; the editor of a folklore paper gave me 180 cubic decimetres, but said that it varied with the locality. All agreed that a *mass* was 15 cubic decimetres.

(1) Grindelwald, 1598. Interesting through its antiquity.

DVKCK · KRISTAN · FANALMEN · HARGESTALT ·

AL · ZIT · ISTÄR · IN · GOTES · GEWALT · 1598 (ÄR = er)

*Translation.*—'Set up here by Christian von Almen (†). At all times is he in God's power.'

(2) At Wiesen, near Gstaad, at the foot of the Wasserengrat. 1608.

FRANTZ · MVRI · HET · DITZ · HVS · GEMACHT ·

DVRCH · GOTTES · HILF · VND · CRAFT ·

DAS · HVS · STAT · IN · GOTTES · HAND ·

GOT · PHINT · DIE · INWOHNER · ALE · SANT

IST · DVRCH · SECELMEISTER · MATTI · (?) ERBVWEN ·

VF · GOT · STAT · SIN · VER · THRVWEN ·

ANO 1608 IAR

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Here PHNT = PHNT = PHVT (= B'hut = Behüte); and SANT = *sammt*. The *Seckelmeister* held the Gemeinde purse.

*Translation*.—‘Franz Muri has built this house’ (he was *Zimmermeister*) ‘through God’s help and strength. This house stands in God’s hand. God guard the inhabitants one and all.’

‘(This house) is erected by Treasurer Matti’ (he was the owner). ‘In God stands his trust.’ ‘In the year 1608 year.’

(3) Near Kandersteg, at Bonderbach, across the stream. 1612.

ES · LÄBT · KEIN · MANS · VF · DISER · EART  
DAS · ÄR · BV · DAS · IME · GEFELT ·  
ES · KOME · FRVW · ODR · MAN ·  
SO · HAN · IK · DOK · MIN · BEST · GETAN ·  
FON · MINEN · GOT · STAN · IK · NVT · AB ·  
DIWIL · IK · LÄBEN · VND · ADLM · HAB ·

DIS · HVS · HAT · PETR · HOLZER · GEMISDERT ·

WÄR · GOT · FERTRVT · DER · HAT · WOL · GEBUT ·

IM · 1612 · IAR · BEDER · ZALER · HAT · DAS · HVS · GEBVWEN

*Translation*.—‘There lives no man on this earth that builds so that he always pleases. Let woman or man come’ (to criticise), ‘still I have done my best.’ [EART, or *Erde*, in error for *Welt*.]

‘I stand not apart from’ (desert not) ‘my God while I have life and breath.’ [ADLM for *Athem*.]

‘Peter Holzer has been *Zimmermeister* to this house’ (or has *meister’d* it), ‘who trusts God, he has built well’ (part of a verse of a hymn).

‘In the year 1612 has Peter Zaler built this house’ (he was owner).

(4) Gstaad, above the Alpina hotel. 1618.

IM · 1618 · IAR

IAKOB · ANEN · VND · IAKOB · RVSI

OVCH · IST · HANS · RVSI · ZIMERMEISTER · GESIN ·  
GOT · SENDE · NVR · FIL · GLŦCK · DAR · IN ·  
PETER · KRISTI · ER · IST · BVWMEISTER · AN · DISEM · HVS ·  
GEWÄSEN ·  
WÄRS · NIT · WEIS · MVS · DISE · GSCHRIFT · LÄSEN ·

*Translation*.—‘In the year 1618 Jacob Anen and Jacob Rusi’ (the proprietors).

‘Also was Hans Rusi *Zimmermeister*. May God send much happiness into it. Peter Christi was *Baumeister* over this house. He who does not know it must read this inscription.’ (WÄRS = *wer es*.)

*Note*.—It is curious to have the two forms, *gesin* and *gewäsen*, in one verse.

(5) Adelboden, off the Butschegg Rd. 1623.

HAUS · BVREN · HAT · DIZ · HVS · LAN · BWEN

VF · GOT · STAT · SIN · FERTRVWEN ·

GEFALT · TAS · SHON · NIT · IDERMAN ·

SO · HAN · ICH · DOH · MIN · BEST · GETAN ·

CRSTAN · BVREN

DER · ZIMER · MESTER · IAKOB · BVREN · DER · WANDCNEHT ·

BENDIHT · BVREN · DER · ZIMERMAN · PETER · BVREN · 1623

IAR.

Then, in much smaller letters, came this record of prices.

EIN · DER · ZIT · DV · DAS · HVS · GEBVWEN · IST · DV · HET · EIN ·

MVT · CARNEN · GOLTEN · AHT · NÄHEN · CRONEN · EIN · MAS ·

ROGEN · EIN · CRONEN · IM · 1623 · IARES ·

[LAN = *lassen* (patois, used still) ; TAS = *Das* ; DV = *Da* ; AHT = *acht* ; NÄHEN = *neuen* ; ZIT = *Zeit* (as usual).]

*Translation.*—‘Haus Buren had this house built ; in God stands his trust. If it does not please every one, still I have done my best. Christian Buren’ (the poet, I suppose).

‘The *Zimmermeister* Jacob Buren, the *Wandknecht* Benedict Buren, the carpenter Peter Buren. 1623 year.’

‘At the time that this house was built a *müth* of corn cost eight new crowns, a *mäs* of rye one crown, in the year 1623.’

As far as I can learn, ‘corn’ was *spelt*, a sort of wheat ; a *müth* was 150 (possibly 180), and a *mäs* was 15, cubic decimetres ; while a ‘new crown’ was 3½ francs. I know of only one other collection, viz., one made in the Zurich district ; and in that these records of prices were not uncommon. I found no other such where I worked.

(6) Twenty minutes from Saanen, on the first little ‘col’ on the Ab-ländschen footpath. Singularly easy to read ; better sheltered from weather than usual. 1630.

IM 1630 IAR

IIN · NAMEN · DES · HEREN · IST · V̄NSER · ANFANG · V̄ND · END ·

GOT · V̄NS · ALEN · S̄IN · GNAD · SEND ·

DAN · WO · GOT · Z̄VM · H̄VS · N̄IT · GIBT · S̄IN · ḠVNST ·

ARBEITET · ĪDER · MAN · V̄MSONST ·

WITER · SO · W̄IL · ICH · ZEIGEN · AN ·

W̄AR · D̄ISES · H̄VS · HET · B̄VWEN · LAN ·

V̄LY · ALEN · SAMT · SAMT · S̄INEN · S̄ONEN · (The carver's

N̄IKLAW̄VS · V̄ND · PETER · ALEN · error.)

WITER · SO · WARDEN · W̄IR · H̄IE · L̄ASEN ·

DAS · GLODV̄ · DOBACH · IST · W̄ARCK · MEISTER · GEW̄ASEN ·

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WIR · MENTZEN · HIE · BŪWEN · ZITLICH · FEST ·  
 V̄ND · SIND · DOCH · ÍTEL · FROMDE · GEST ·  
 WO · WIR · N̄VN · EWIG · HOMEN · HÍN · (carver's error)  
 DA · STAT · GAR · WENIG · V̄NSER · SEIN ·  
 GOT · GÄB · V̄NS · ALEN · EİN · SELIG · ENDTT · AMENN.

HOMEN is error for *kommen*. SEIN = *Sinn*; and, to the carver's mind it would seem, rhymed with *hin*.

This last verse is an interesting variant on one that very often occurs. [See No. 18.]

*Translation*.—‘In the year 1630.’

‘In the name of the Lord is our undertaking and completing.’ [Cf. *Anfang* in No. 17.] ‘May God send us all his grace. Since where God gives not his favour to the house, there worketh every man in vain.’

‘Further will I indicate who had this house built. (It was) Uly Allen with his sons Nicolas and Peter Allen.’

‘Further shall we here read that Claud Dobach was *Werkmeister*.’

‘We men here build for temporal purposes strongly; and yet are mere stranger-sojourners. But where we go’ (it surely should be *hin-gehen*?) ‘(to dwell) for Eternity, there is our mind but little fixed. God give us all a blessed end. Amen.’

(7) Kandersteg, 1637. Here the Kander is the main stream, the Oeschinen torrent comes down a side valley, while the little Irfig meanders over flat land behind the house. RVMAN · vs is *räume man aus*, i.e. ‘clear out the bed of the stream.’ SCHWELMAN · vs is *schwelle man aus*, and means ‘terrace up the bed of the stream,’ so that it runs in a series of level bits and small waterfalls, and ceases to gnaw away the banks. Both treatments were intended to obviate floods. As mentioned on p. 282, EILENGREMER = *je länger je mehr*, and means ‘keep on doing it.’ In the second line *sege* would be more usual; but it was *sege* as cut. [In two other inscriptions I found ‘*Er legt den Grund und baut es aus*.’]

Gott gebe Glück in dieses Hús,  
 Der sege den Grund und baue es us,  
 Also ist dise Bebusung gebuwen allhar  
 So wann von Gottes Geburt zäpft 1637 Jahr.

In the next verse a beam cut off two terminal D's—

PETR · HOLZER · ZIMERMISTER · IN · DEM · LAN[D]  
 GOT · BEWAR · IN · SINE · GESWINE · HAN[D].

Here GESWINE = *geschwinde* = swift, prompt, ready (to help).

Dis Hús hat Heinrich Glausen und sine Sun lassen buwen  
 Auff Gott stat all Ir Vertruwen.

Ich gange us oder in,  
 So ist der Tod und wartet min.  
 Ich bitten Gott durch süne Gnab,

Das mir die Sünd der Seel nitt schad.  
Gott well uns bhüten fru und spatt.

[Well = wolle; patois.]

The above was on one side of the house. On another side came—

DAS · HVS · STAT · IN · GOTTES · GEWALT · VND · RVMAN ·  
DER · CANDER · EHSIG (error for *flisig*) · VS · VND · SCHWELMAN ·  
DEM · EVSCHEBAC · FLISIG · VS · VND · DAS · EILENGREMER ·  
SVNST · STVNDE · DAS · HVS · INNEM · SEE. [Compare No. 21.]

*Translation.*—‘May God give happiness to this house. May he bless’ (error for *lay*?) ‘the foundation and complete the building. So was this dwelling built here when it counted 1637 year from God’s birth.’

‘Peter Holzer *Zimmermeister* in the land’ (= in these parts?). ‘May God preserve (this house) in his ready hand.’

‘Heinrich Clausen and his sons had this house built. In God stands their trust.’

‘I go out or in; but Death is (there) and awaits me. I pray God through his grace that Sin may not harm my soul.’

‘This house stands in God’s power. And clear the (bed of the) Kander out diligently, and terrace up the (bed of the) Oeschinen stream diligently, and keep on doing it; otherwise the house would stand in a lake’ (*i.e.* get flooded).

(8) Kandersteg, 1646. The spelling here is very bad; as in HVSMSTDR for *Hausmeister*. *Gwer* is a Swiss Christian name (Cyrenius or Quirinius). The words ‘*Gwer min Son Got beä in*’ were crowded in, the space being insufficient; and I think *beä* was intended for *behüte*. I may mention that *Kandersteg* is still pronounced *Kanderstag* by the villagers.

1646

GVWER · FVRER · DÄR · HVSMSTDR · VND · HANS · FVRER ·  
VND · STEFAD · FVRER · VND · IELIAD · EGER · VF · GOT · STAT ·  
IER · FERDERVWEN · GWER · MIN · SON · GOT · BEÄ · IN.

DAS · BLVT · IESV · MAHT · VNS · REIN · VON · ALE · SVNT ·  
HALT · FEST · AN · GOT · FATE · SON · HEIL · GĖST (the dot may represent an I).

DAS · HVS · STAT · IN · GOTTES · HANT ·

GOT · BEWAR · DIE · INWONER · FOR · ALER · SHAND ·

DAN · ER · IST · RICH · VND · HAT · GV · GABEN

HIE · CIDTIG · VND · IM · EWIG · [LABEN] (a bit cut out).

[CIDTIG = *Zeitig*, error for *Zeitlich*. So, in the next line, CALER for *Zaler*. I supply the word *Leben*; a beam had been put in and clearly cut off a word. Notice three ways in all of spelling *Gwer*.]

GVWR · CÄLER · IST · MIN · RACTER · NAMEN ·

EIN · STAGER · FON · HALBER · STAMEN ·

SO · BIT · IC · GOT · VM · SIN · GNAT ·

[DAS] · MER · DI[E] · SVN[D] · DER · SEL · NVT · SHAT

(Two letters illegible.)

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*Translation.*—‘Gwer Furer the Hausmeister’ (probably here means *Zimmermeister*), ‘and Hans Furer and Stefan Furer and Gilian Furer’ (*Wandknechte* I suppose). ‘In God stands their trust. Gwer, my son, God [guard him ?].’

‘The blood of Jesus makes us clean from all sin. Hold fast to God, Father, Son (and) Holy Ghost.’

‘This house stands in God’s hand. May God preserve the indwellers from all shame. For he is rich and has good gifts, both temporally and in eternal [life].’

‘Gwer Zaler is my right name ; a Stegger by half race’ (on his mother’s side ?). ‘So I pray God for his grace [that] Sin may not harm my soul.’

(9) Near Adelboden, on Hirzboden, 1659. The deprecation of criticism is very common ; but the verse on ‘enduring’ I have only found this once

GOT · ALEIN · DIE · ER ·  
 DAN · AR · IST · BVWMEISTER ·  
 OVCH · FATER · IN · DÄM · LAND ·  
 ÄR · BEHV̇T · VNS · ALE · VOR · SÑN · VND · SCHANT. AMEN.  
 ÄS · LÄBT · KEIN · MÄNSCH · VF · DISER · WÄLD ·  
 DÄR · BVWEN · KAN · DAS · IEDERMAN · GEFELT ·  
 VND · BEFELTS · GLICH · WOL · NIT · IEDERMAN ·  
 SO · HAN · ICH · DOCH · MIN · BEST · GEDAN.

ALSO · HAT · GOT · DIE · WÄLD · GELIEBET (etc. For reasons of space I omit the rest of this well-known text). ANO 1659 IAR.

SCHWIG · MEID · GEDVLDID · VND · FERTRAG ·  
 DEIN · NODT · NET · IDEDRMAN · KLAG ·  
 SO · KVNDT · DIER · DIN · GLVK · VON · GOT · DEN · HEREN ·  
 ALE · TAG ·  
 IM · MK · 1659 · IAR.

Here KVNDT, as in another inscription KVND (See No. 10), stands for *kommt*. I do not know what MK stands for ; but I suspect that it is equivalent to Anno Domini (Mit Kristus ?). At Grindelwald I found MG (mit Gott ?).

*Translation.*—‘To God alone the honour, since he is *Baumeister* and also Father in the land. May he guard us from all sin and shame.’

‘There lives no man on this world that can so build as to please every one. And even if it does not please every one, nevertheless I have done my best.’

‘God so loved the world . . . , etc.’ (the well-known text).

‘Be silent ; give way (?) patiently, and endure. Lament not thy misery (or evil case) to every one. So comes’ (*i.e.* will come) ‘to thee thy happiness from God the Lord every day.’

*Remark.*—I give my readers free permission to punctuate the last three rhyming lines differently ; the sense remains much the same.



(10) Heiligkreuz near Binn, 1667. This was inside, on the ceiling of the restaurant. On an iron-protected door near the basement was the date 1647. There were many contractions not given here. In this case the words were well spaced and there were no dots. As regards FREID, etc., see p. 282. I take *An der Lede* to be a surname like *Zur Tamen*; but, in this one case, I have no information (as yet) as to whether the name existed in the valley.

PREID DICH AL STVND HIET DICH VOR SINDEN  
DAS DICH DER TOD DIE WACHEND EINDEN

(error for *finden*)

WAN DER TOD SO OFT KVND VN VORHOFT

(KVND = *kommt*)

M ANDREA AN DER LEDE HAT DISES HOVS  
IN HOLZ VND STEIN GANTZ GEMACHET AVS

DAS ZITLICH LAEBEN VND IPIG KEIT  
DIE WELTLICH FREID VND ITELKEIT  
DVRCH TODTES MACHT ES WOL BETRACHT  
WIE BALD IST ALLS VERGANGEN  
DIE EWIGFREID SO NIE VER GEIT  
DARNACH HAB DEIN VER LANGEN

ZV GOTTES EHR AL CHREITZ VND LEID  
AL TRIEBSELIGKEIT  
GEDVLTIG LEIDEN ALLEZEIT  
DAS IST DER WEG ZVR SELIGKEIT.

*Translation.*—‘Prepare thyself every hour, keep thyself from Sin, that Death may find thee waking; since Death so often comes unexpectedly.’ ‘M. Andrea an der Lede’ (? I take it to be a name) ‘has built<sup>1</sup> this house entirely, using wood and stone.’ ‘Temporal Life and luxury, worldly joy and vanity, consider it well from the point of view of Death’s might; how soon all passes away! Eternal joy never thus passes away; let thy longing be for it.’ ‘To endure always patiently, to God’s honour, all cross and suffering, all affliction’ (or sadness?), ‘that is the path to blessedness!’

(11) Up the Avers Thal, beyond Cresta, south of Thusis, 1664. I found out about the name of the wife from a descendant living at Zürich. I believe the first part was intended for a hexameter and pentameter, though (as usual) it was not written in the verse form.

HOSTIĒVS · INVITIS · VIVAT · STRĪBAEA · PROPAGO ·  
AGERE · ET · PATI · FORTIA · STRĪBAEVM · EST · 1664

AVĠVSTN · STRĪB · ET · ELENA · MENVSVCMVĪR.

(The name *Helena Menusia von Castelmur* appears to occur in the family records.)

<sup>1</sup> He was the builder, not the owner, I think.

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*Translation.*—‘In despite of enemies, long live the Strubaeen race ! To act and endure greatly’ (or strong things) ‘is a Strubaeen quality, 1664.’ ‘Augustin Strub and Helena Menusia von Castelnmur.’

(12) From the Church at Champéry. I believe it was a more modern copy of an old inscription that was cut somewhere else on the church (and perhaps still exists?).

QVOD AN TRI MVLCE PA  
GVIS STI DINE VIT  
HOC SAN XRI DVLCE LA

It reads thus : ‘*quod anguis tristi mvlcedine pavit, hoc sanguis Christi dulcedine lavit.*’

*Translation.*—‘What (= whom) the Serpent has feasted with his baneful delights, the blood of Christ has washed with its sweetness.’

(13) Near Adelboden, in the Bonderthal, 1698. Part was in Roman capitals, part in German. I give only part of this inscription, leaving out Scriptural quotations and names of *Zimmermeister*, etc.

AN · GOTTES · GNAD · VND · MILDEN · SEGEN ·  
IST · ALLES · GANZ · VND · GAR · GELEGEN ·  
VND · OHNE · HIMELS · HñLF · VND · GñNST ·  
IST · ALLER · MENSCHEN · THñNN · VMSONST ·  
3m IAHR 1698 HINRICH · EGGER.

Dies Haus baut Thomas Gygn har  
Als er 77 Jahr alt wahr: (war)  
Und sein Weib 71 Zeit (zählte)  
3ft sy geböhren auff die Welt.

*N.B.*—The numerals must be read as ‘sieben und siebzig,’ etc.

*Translation.*—‘On God’s grace and generous blessing is all absolutely dependent; and without Heaven’s help and favour is all men’s action vain. In the year 1698. Heinrich Egger.’

‘Thomas Gygen built this house here when he was 77 years old, and his wife numbered 71 years was she born into the world’ (a confused construction, I take it).

(14) Near Adelboden, in the Stiegelschwand. Again I leave out much (verses *wir bauen alle feste, feste*, etc., and *Ich gehe aus oder ein*, etc.) and give mainly another form of deprecation of criticism. Date 1702.

Welcher selbstn nitt vill fann  
Soll diß Haus untadlet lan  
Sott seines Wägs fortgahn  
Gebauen 3m 1702 Jahr.

Gebauen durch Hans und Elisabeth Senften zwy leidige  
Geschwist [cut off here].

*Tadeln* is to criticise unfavourably; *leidig* (painful or distressing, etc.) is an error for *ledig* (solitary or unmarried); *vill* = *viel*.

*Translation.*—‘He who cannot himself do much should let this house uncriticised follow God’s way. Built in the year 1702. Built by Hans and Elisabeth Senften, an unmarried brother-and-sister pair.’

(15) The following was given me by Frau Müller of the Hôtel Müller, Kandersteg. She said it was on a carpenter’s plane, and was of date 1704. I cannot answer *personally* for spelling or date.

Ich lãb', und wiß nit wie lang;  
Ich Stärb', und wiß nit wan;  
Ich fahre dahin und wiß nit wohin;  
Mich wundert, daß ich so frõhlich bin.

*Translation.*—‘I live, and know not how long; I die, and know not when; I am on a journey, and I know not whither; I marvel that I am so joyous as I am!’

(16) Near Adelboden, on Hirzboden, 1706. I give two verses of this only.

Hüt dich; Schwer nicht in meinem Fuß,  
Oder gang zur Thür heinuß;  
Dan Gott der Her, vom Himmel rich  
Wôcht Bid strafen, mich und dich, zuglich.  
Im 1706 Jar.  
Herr Jesu, der Süße Namen dein  
In Tod erquidt die Seele mein.

*Translation.*—‘Take heed! Swear not in my house! Or go out of the door! For God the Lord from Heaven might punish both, you and me, at the same time.’ [*i.e.* I might be involved in your punishment.]

‘Lord Jesus, thy sweet name quickens my soul in death.’

(17) Near Adelboden, in the Bonderthal, 1731. I leave out part.

Der Herr behüte Euch all Zeit,  
Und Eure Seel bewahr  
Vor Ubel und Gefahr;  
Der Herr Euch nim in Ewigkeit;  
Den Eingang durch sein Güte  
Und den Ausgang behüte

Der Herr behüte Tach und Umach  
Vor allen Schaden und Ungema[ch]. (A bit cut off.)

ALL · MIN · AN · FANG · ZV · IDER · FRIST ·  
GESÄCH · IM · NAMEN · IESV · CHRIST · [GESACH = *geschehe*]  
DER · STEHE · MIR · BEI · FRVH · VND · SPAT  
BIS · ALL · MIN · [THV]N · IN · ENDE · HAT. [A bit cut out]

*Translation.*—‘The Lord protect thee alway and preserve thy soul from

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evil and danger. The Lord receive thee into Eternity ; (and) through his goodness protect thy ingoing and outgoing.'

'The Lord protect roof and chamber from all harm and trouble.'

'Let every undertaking of mine at all times be set about in the name of Jesus Christ. May he stand by me early and late until all my activity has an end.'

(18) Kandersteg, 1734. I give part. Compare with Nos. 6 and 7. After the names (in rhyme) of Zimmermeister, etc., comes—

Wir bauwen Huser hoch und vest,  
Und seind doch fründe Gest;  
Und wo wir Ewig Wollen sein,  
Doch bauwen wenig wir dordt hein,  
O Heiland mein.

GVTE · FRND · VND · LIBE · NACHIVREN ·  
AN · MVHY · VND · ARBEIT · HABT · KIN · DVREN ·  
EVCH · SÄLBSTEN · SCHON · AVCH · MIR · ZV · GVTT ·  
DEN · IRFIG · WOHL · AVSRVMEN · THVT ·  
VND · DIE · KANDER · NOCH · VIL · MER ·  
SONST · BIN · ICH · IM · SEE ·

In this, of course, the house is the speaker. DVREN = *Zaudern*, to procrastinate, etc.

Als man von Christi Geburt zelte klar (zählte)  
1734 Jahr  
Hat Peter Zahler und Barbara Richen Ehesleuth sein,  
Und Anna Miller die Mutter sein,  
Auff steiffe Hoffnung und Gott (?) vertrauen,  
In Gottes Nahmen hier gebauen  
Diß Haus für sie und ihr Geschlecht.  
Gott geb daß wir all bawen recht.

Here, as usual, we read off the date in words, to make the line long enough : 'Tausend, sieben hundert, vier-und-dreizig, Jahr.'

*Translation.* (First part omitted.)—'We build houses high and strong, and yet are stranger-sojourners. And where we wish to be for ever, there build we little. O Saviour mine !'

'Good friends and dear neighbours, don't shirk (or put off) trouble and work, both for your own benefit and mine. Clear the Irfig well out' (see No. 7) 'and the Kander still more ; else I am in a lake !' (*i.e.* flooded).

'As one counted clearly 1734 years from Christ's birth, then did Peter Zahler and Barbara Richen, a worthy (or cultivated ?) married pair, and Anna Miller, his mother (relying) on firm hope and trust in God (?), in God's name here build this house for themselves and their race. God grant that we all build aright.'

(19) Close to Grindelwald ; on a *Speicher* (store-house for cheese, etc.) on the Bach-alp. [The printers could not manage the inversions of letters.]

MG · IM · 1739 · IAR · DAS · DEI · LOWINA · ZWELF ·  
SPICHERA · NAMWALTHARTBOREN · VND ·  
ELS · BET · IN · ÄBNIT.

Written in modern German this would run—

*M. G. Im 1739 Jahr, das die Lawine zwölf Speichere nahm. Walthart Boren and Elsbeth Inebnit.*

Possibly 'M. G.' means 'Mit Gott,' or else is short for some other form of 'Anno Domini.'

*Translation.*—'M. G. In the year 1739 when' (literally *that*) 'the avalanche carried off twelve store-houses. Walthart Boren & Elsbeth Inebnit' (built this).

The spelling, inversion of letters, and strange division of the words, argued an unusual ignorance.

(20) At Adelboden, 1744. The first verse was under a verandah and quite clear ; but the letters were strangely formed.

Ihr Geschworenen Betrachetett Iuren [Eid] (partly hidden)  
Daß Iß Euch Nit Wårde Leid  
Wan Ihr Euch Solt Stelf Vor Gottes Grift  
Welchs Iure Seel Ganz Hart Ann Grift.

Gott allin die Ehr. Christian Trummer

Betracht Ein in iber dise kurtz Jit  
Gegen der langen Ewigkeit.

[This must be '*Betracht ein Jeder* . . .]. I leave out the rest as uninteresting. Part was a verse of a hymn.

*Translation.*—'You who are sworn' (to do justice, I suppose), 'consider your oath ; that it may not go ill with you when you shall place yourself before God's Court of Justice, which grips your soul hard.' [*Ann Grift* = *angreift*.]

'To God alone the honour. Christian Trummer.

'Consider, each one, this brief Time, as against long Eternity.'

(21) Near Adelboden, on the Bütschegg Road. On a cattle-shed,

Der Fauter allen Reich bescheret,  
Und Der die jungen Raben neret,  
Der wolle deise Scheur bewahren  
Zunüß der Menschen lange Jahren. 1766.

[*Fauter* = *Futter* ; *neret* = *nähret*.]

*Translation.*—'He who assigns fodder to all cattle and nourishes the young ravens, may he will to preserve this shed to the use of men for long years.'

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(22) Near Adelboden, on the Bütschegg Road. 1771.

Ich, Peter Kieder, habe mir  
Selbst dies Haus gebauen hier,  
Und Christen Sien Wandknächt wahr.  
Dank seye der Gutthäter Schaar.

Herr, wir wollen auf dich bauen  
Und Vertrauen.  
Stärk in uns die Zuversicht;  
Schenk uns deine Gnaad und Segen;  
Und hingegen  
Wende ab dein Straaf Gericht.

Gebauen durch Peter Kieder und Susanna Pieren im Jahr des Herrn.  
1771.

Der Höchste Gott diß Haus bewahr  
Vor Feur und allerley Gefahr.

*Translation.*—‘I, Peter Kieder, have myself built this house for myself here’ (he was his own *Zimmermeister*); ‘and Christian Öster was *Wandknecht*. Thanks to the host of benefactors’ (i.e. volunteer helpers). The name in the valley is Öster, not Östen.

‘Lord, we will build and rely on thee. Strengthen in us Trust; give us thy favour and blessing; and, on the other hand, turn from us thy punishing Justice.’

‘Built by Peter Kieder and Susanna Pieren in the year of the Lord 1771.’  
(Owners.)

‘The most high God preserve this House from fire and every sort of danger.’

(23) Near Adelboden, Bütschegg Road. 1774.

Leb stets vergnügt  
Wie es Gott fügt.

Hier baute ich nach meinem Sinn,  
Doch jedem nicht gefällig bin.  
Wem es nun eben nicht gefällt,  
Der denk er hab es nicht bezahlt.

Then names, as usual. The rhythm of the next is like that of the hoofs of a galloping cart horse.

Dreieinig alleinig preiswürdigste Lieb  
Dir dank ich sehr herzlich und innigst voraus.  
- Ich bitte geleite mich ferner, und gieb  
Allwegen dein Segen zu Felser und Haus.  
Den werthen Gutthätren auch dank ich sehr schön;  
Gott reichlich sie Zeitlich und Ewig belohn.

Ein jeder trachte doch zu bauen seine Hütten  
 Auf solchem guten Grund und fester Fundament  
 Daß Jesus selbst ist der für uns hat gelitten;  
 So ist die Wohnung gut und nimt ein selig End.

Wachet.

Auf Gottes Hoffnung und Vertrauen  
 Hat Gilgan Schmid allhier gebauen  
 Und Madlena Zensten sein Ehgemahl.  
 O Gott, erfüll es überall  
 Mit deiner Gnad und reicher Segen;  
 Daran ist Alles gar gelegen.

*Translation.*—‘Live always contented with what’ (*lit. as*) ‘God ordains.  
 ‘Here built I after my own ideas, yet have not pleased every one. Let he  
 whom it has not pleased consider that he has not paid for it.’

‘O Tri-une, sole, and most praise-deserving Love! Thee first do I  
 thank with heart and soul. I pray thee, guide me further and give all-  
 way thy blessing to fields and house. Also I thank right heartily my  
 worthy benefactors’ (*i.e.* helpers); ‘may God reward them richly, both  
 temporally and eternally.’

‘Let each man try to build his chalets on such good ground and firm  
 foundation as Jesus himself is, who has suffered for us. So is the dwelling  
 good and has a happy completion.’

‘Watch!’

‘On hope and trust in God has Gilgan Schmid here built, with Madlena  
 Zensten (= Senften) his spouse. O God, fill it through and through with  
 thy grace and rich blessing; on that is everything dependent.’

(24) Adelboden. 1776.

Gott wolle dies Haus bewahren  
 Vor Wasser Wind und Feuer Gefahren.  
 Herr, segne die so drinnen wohnen  
 Und schenk ihn endlich Himmels Kronen.  
 Ihr alle, die Ihr hier hinfort thut vorbey gehen,  
 Betrachtet doch den Schmerz den Jesus that außsehen.  
 Er gab sich, Mensch, für dich, zum Loßgelt willig sein;  
 Draum saß im Glaube Ihn; so fürst du mit Gewein.

[*hein* = *hin*; *Gewein* = *Gewinn*.]

Stadthalter Würen(?) wolt ein jrdisch Haus erbauen.  
 Gott aber ruffte ihn ein besseres Inbesehen.  
 Drum ließ Sara Viern, sein Wittwe, diß aufführen.  
 Der Höchste wolle sie mit Trost und Gnade Zieren.

*Translation.*—‘May God will to preserve this house from Water-,

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Wind-, and Fire-, dangers. Lord, bless all who dwell in it, and give them finally Heaven's crowns.'

'Ye all who in the future pass by, consider the pain that Jesus endured. He gave himself, Man, for thee, willingly as a ransom; therefore lay hold on him in faith; so is death a gain<sup>to</sup> thee.'

'*Stadthalter*' (an office) 'Würen (?) intended to build an earthly house; God, however, called him away to look at a better one. So Sara Biern' (Pieren?) 'got this carried out. May the Highest will to adorn (?) her with Consolation and Grace.' [Probably *Würen* is *Buren*.]

(25) Adelboden; Hirzboden, near mouth of the Bonderthal. 1780. Providence, and the fire, are somewhat mixed up.

Den 20 Augusten, nach Mitternacht,  
Entstunde in (= ein) Feuer mit großer Macht;  
Hat uns in Armuth gesetzt  
Doch gnädig widerum ergetzt (= ergötzt)  
Und viel Gutherer uns beschert  
Und Gott geehrt. Im 1780 Jahr.

I leave out the rest of the inscription.

*Translation.*—'On August 20, after midnight, there broke out a fire with great might. It placed us in great poverty; but graciously' (!) 'restored (or comforted) us again, and provided us with friends and honoured God.'

(26) Adelboden, below the village. 1791. I take out two lines only.

Durch Christen Hari Zimmermeister ist dieses Haus gemessen,  
Durch Peter Bürn und Christen German hart zusammen presen.

*Translation.*—'By Christian Hari *Zimmermeister* was this house measured; by Peter Bürn and Christian German pressed hard together.' [*Wandknechte*.]

(27) Adelboden, Bütschegg Road. 1797. I give one verse.

Ich besitz mit Freuden Was mir Gott bescheiden  
Durch sein Gut und Treuw.  
Nicht durch Trüg und Tücke Sucht ich mir Glück  
Zu der späten Reuw.

*Translation.*—'I possess with joy what God has assigned to me through his goodness and faithfulness. Not by deceit and wile did I seek for myself good fortune to my after-regret.'

(28) Adelboden; Boden. 1800. Same as another of 1799. The times of the Napoleonic wars, when Switzerland was a battle-ground.

|                                 |                                    |
|---------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Wir bauen hier ein neues Haus   | Gott weiß ob wir es machen aus;    |
| Wir leben in betrübten Zeiten,  | Die Welt ist voll von Krieg und    |
|                                 | Streiten;                          |
| O lieber Gott, verlaß uns nicht | Wann unser Irdisch Haus zerbricht! |
|                                 | Gott mit uns allen.                |



*Translation.*—‘We build here a new house; God knows if we shall finish it! We live in troubled times; the world is full of war and strife. O dear God, desert us not when our earthly house breaks up!’

*Note.*—Another inscription of 1800 breathes the same despairing spirit. So that makes three at Adelboden bearing witness to these wars.

(29) Adelboden, across the stream, above the saw-mill. 1810. Even in 1810 the land was poverty-stricken owing to these wars.

Wir leben in dem Jammer Stand  
Die Armuth drückt das ganze Land.  
Wir sind besetzt(?) mit vielen Sünden  
Drum müssen wir die Straf empfinden.  
Gott, mach uns vom Elend los!  
Das Geld ist klein, die Untren groß.  
Doch aber den Gutthateren allen  
Danken wir mit Wohlgefallen;  
Wünschen Ihnen Gottes Segen  
U. dazu das Ewig Leben.

*Translation.*—‘We live in a condition of wretchedness; Poverty weighs on the whole Land. We are stained with many Sins; therefore must we experience the punishment. O God, free us from this misery! Scant is Wealth; abundant is Faithlessness. Yet thank we with pleasure our benefactors’ (as usual, volunteer helpers in building, I suppose); ‘wish them God’s blessing; and thereto eternal life.’

(30) Adelboden; Stiegelschwand. 1824. I give one verse.

Ein Freund in der Noth,  
Ein Freund in dem Tod,  
Ein Freund unter dem Rücken,  
Das sind drey starke Brücken.

*Translation.*—‘A Friend in adversity, a Friend in Death, a Friend at one’s back—those are three strong bridges!’

[Bridges play a great part in the life in these mountains where the streams are unfordable.]

(31) Binn. 1826. The beam in one’s own, the mote in one’s brother’s, eye.

|                        |                       |
|------------------------|-----------------------|
| Wer mich zurecht legt, | Gedenkt seiner nicht. |
| Gedächst er seiner,    | So vergaß er meiner.  |

Wenn Reid brennte wie Feur      So wär das Holz nicht theuer.

*Translation.*—‘He who finds fault with me, forgets himself’ (i.e. his own

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faults). 'Were he to remember himself, he would forget me.' 'If Envy burned like Fire, fuel would be cheap.'

[At Adelboden I found much the same (1805)—

|                            |                               |
|----------------------------|-------------------------------|
| <i>Mancher mich richt,</i> | <i>Gedenckt seiner nicht.</i> |
| <i>Gedenckte er sein,</i>  | <i>So vergesse er mein.]</i>  |

---

(32) Adelboden ; Hirzboden. I give one verse, showing another form of the deprecation of criticism, 1869.

|   |                                      |
|---|--------------------------------------|
| <i>Wer baut an die Straßen</i>            | <i>Muß sich tadeln lassen.</i>       |
| <i>Ich habe gebaut nach meinem Sinn ;</i> | <i>Ein Anderer baue wie er will.</i> |

*Translation.*—'Who builds by the roadside must expect to get criticised. I have built according to my ideas ; let another build as he will.'

---

(33) Adelboden, on the Bütschegg Road. Quite new ; cf. 19—?

*Es gehen zwei Gäste ein und aus,  
So lang du wohnst in diesem Haus.  
Sie sind geheissen Lieb und Leid ;  
Du sollst sie wohl empfangen beid.*

*Translation.*—'So long as thou dwellest in this house there pass in and out two Guests. Their names are Love and Sorrow ; thou shouldst make them both welcome.'

## CHAPTER XVIII

And then I looked up toward a mountain-tract,  
That girt the region with high cliff and lawn :  
I saw that every morning, far withdrawn,  
Beyond the darkness and the cataract,  
God made himself an awful rose of dawn.

*Tennyson.*

SWITZERLAND IN AUTUMN ONCE MORE, 1907—ADEL-  
BODEN IN WINTER, 1907-8

WHEN I left Champeze, I wandered off alone over the Col d'Arpette ; descended towards Trient—much admiring the views of the Glacier du Trient by the way ; saw Fins Hauts, and was far more attracted by the look of Marecotte, which lies further on ; reached Adalboden over the Gemmi and Rothe Kümme ; and finally settled down at Kandersteg. There I had a solitary but not altogether uninteresting time.

One day I went up with Abraham Müller (father) and two others and watched them marking trees for public auction. It was interesting to see at what cheap rates trees are sold when not easily accessible. Some data that I obtained from Abraham Müller (who is chief forester at Kandersteg) may be of interest. He tells me that fir-, not larch-, wood is burned there ; and that it costs about fifteen francs for a pile measuring one cubic metre, or twelve shillings for about thirty-five cubic feet (not of solid wood of course), as bought in the village. A fine fir-tree of say fifty to sixty centimetres (*i.e.* about twenty to twenty-four inches) diameter at the height of one's breast, which

would make more than three cubic metres of firewood without counting the branches, or say a good four cubic metres in all, would be sold for some fifty francs if near the village. If the tree were an hour off the village, the price would be about one-quarter less, if two to three hours off about one-third less, and if three to four hours off about one-half of the above. If there be any error in some of these estimates one can at any rate rely on the accuracy of the two facts, the price of firewood in Kandersteg, and the falling off of the value of the tree with its remoteness from the village.

Firewood seems to vary much in price. Herr Schmid (of Ernen and Binn) tells me that at Fiesch and Ernen the price is as much as twenty to twenty-five francs per cubic metre.

Another day I went to see the blue lake lower down the valley. Certainly the colour is wonderful.

It is pretty certain that water, when of this pure blue, owes its colour to the same cause as that to which the sky owes it, viz., to the presence of *very* minute particles distributed through it, and to the absence of coarser-grained impurities.

Now the blue lake near Arolla has, I imagine, the coarser particles *filtered* out of it ; for the water supplying it comes from underground.

But this blue lake, in the Kander valley, is fed by an open stream ; and decaying leaves abound. So the removal of coarser particles, which I imagine is essential, must be effected otherwise. I noticed that the lake deposits silica (or lime ?), 'fossilising' objects thrown into it. So my provisional view is that the water is cleared of coarser dirt by this being encrusted with silica (or lime), and so caused to sink to the bottom.

Another day I joined in a village shooting fête. I was very much struck with the extraordinarily thorough way in which everything was managed, and with the total absence of disputes. There was no squire or clergyman to organise things ; the big men, the hotel owners, had nothing to do with it ; one may say that the 'peasantry' (guides and the like) managed it all among themselves. There were all sorts of competitions ; some choose those in which skill, others those in which a greater degree of chance, predominated. I won a large saw for cutting up firewood, a hammer, and a big pair of pliers ; the prizes were practical.

One evening I was most hospitably invited to be present at a sociable evening in one of the hotels, being the only stranger present. There was much singing and dancing ; drinks taken were paid for. If it be not ungrateful to criticise, I would say that, here as elsewhere, I found the Swiss remarkable rather for a hearty liking for music than for a fine musical temperament. Some of the singing was choral, the pieces having been learned, and the singers standing together to sing ; while some was less formal. It was curious to hear a portly middle-aged man, sitting at his beer or wine, suddenly lead off with some decidedly weird jödel. Others would catch up the drift of it and join in ; and now and then across the weighty swing of it would break the half-joyous, half-mocking, and wholly unmusical *descending* falsetto laugh that seems to be a part of Swiss jödling. The dancing was hearty, and performed with an emphatic attention to time ; and in the round dances all would join at intervals in a sort of musical procession, the music changing its character.

Another point of interest in this staying on from summer into winter was the seeing how the chamois changed from

their reddish hue to the dark colour of winter ; and how the ptarmigan, bit by bit, became practically white.

Of autumn climbs I have already said enough ; and here I will only add that one may do worse in October than visit the huts with a book and have tea there—if the way be free from avalanche danger.

Of a visit to Champéry that I made before I went to Adelboden for the winter, one memory stands out. I went off one day for the Pte de Vorla. This peak, some 7600 feet above the sea only, but nevertheless a fair height for November, lies just on the Savoy side of the picturesque frontier ridge that looks down on the route to the Col de Coux. I gained the higher alp, now covered with snow, and found the ridge that I had to cross shrouded in mist. But I plunged up into it, hoping for the best.

Great was my delight when, on reaching the top of this ridge, I found that I was in clear sunlight. I went to the summit of the Pte de Vorla, and there I lay basking in the sun. Below me was a rippling white sea of cloud dotted with islands and running up 'inland' in estuaries ; above me the blue sky ; not a breath of wind. Bustling life was remote ; I lay, and rested, and dreamed.

The landlord at Adelboden had telegraphed to me that ' the Gemmi-Engstligen-alp route to Adelboden was still practicable with a guide ' ; in winter it is usually impossible. I concluded that I could cross alone, if I had my axe with me, and crampons in my sack. I found that it was ' all right ' ; but the cold in the Rothe Kümme was so deadly that I should have been glad of ski-ing footgear. The steep path down the cliffs which fall towards Adelboden were still safe to descend ; but the sheets of ice that covered it in parts made me bring out my crampons. I reached Adelboden without accident.

A book might well be written on a winter at such a place as Adelboden; I will not attempt it. Nor will I attempt to describe at length the art of ski-ing, nor the delights (*and dangers*) of tours on ski.

Only, in case some of my readers know nothing of ski, I will say enough to make my description of a tour or two intelligible.

Speaking generally of all places above a certain level (and I think that it will be quite accurate enough if I call this 3000 feet, or more, above the sea), I may say that in Switzerland winter covers valley, forest, hill, and high mountain of not too steep slope, with a deep layer of snow. Clear skies and a glorious sun are the rule, and all nature has a splendid beauty that, save for a certain monotony of whiteness, transcends the beauty of summer. But to men on foot this world is practically forbidden; for the cold is such that in general the snow does not become compacted, and all wandering from the few beaten sleigh tracks or roads is very heavy work.

Canadian snow-shoes or Swiss raquets enable one to plod laboriously further afield; but, until the Norwegian *ski* were introduced, the winter world of the hills remained practically untrodden. These ski are strips of wood, some six to seven feet long and three inches broad, running to a point and curved up at the front end; and their enormous advantage over all other snow-shoes lies in the fact that, when once a height is gained, the descent may be made at any pace you please. You shoot down, gliding; you do not walk down as on raquets.

Day after day would we start off along some forest path, then mount between the dark trees, make our way over alps with gliding steps, and lunch in the balcony of some part-buried chalet above the limit of the forests, basking

in the sun. Then followed the winding or zig-zag route up to some hill-summit 7000, 8000, or 9000 feet above the sea ; and the rest, not unaccompanied by a pipe, while we made out one by one the giants of the big mountain groups. And then the descent ; the crown of the day's pleasures ! Like birds on the wing we swooped, we curved, the keen air rushing past us ; alp, chalet, and forest rose to meet us again ; and once more we gained the forest path down which we now slid warily ; and then a more leisurely progress along the road brought us home satisfied and hungry.

But sometimes one feels more ambitious, and longs to try something really big ; or at any rate big as a winter climb. There are risks, and there may be discomforts. But to attain the summit of ' a peak ' is something to have achieved ; and *if the snow be good*,<sup>1</sup> the run down surpasses anything experienced in the ordinary expeditions.

This longing, after a time, came upon me. So on January 19, I set off from Adelboden with a German friend, Herr Kuhn, to Kandersteg, with the intention of returning to Adelboden over the Wildstrubel and Wildhorn. We were not able to get one of the Müllers as guide, so took another man ; and in the afternoon, with him, and the landlord of the Schwarenbach inn, and a lad to cook there, we set off up the Gemmi path on foot.

Arrived at the little restaurant at the top of the zig-zags, we put on ski and went off up to the right, leaving the main path where it begins to go along the hillside over the Gasterenthal, and reaching the Spitalmatte by a safer route.

The Schwarenbach inn was deadly chill. Here is one disadvantage of winter ascents ; there is no pleasant strolling or sitting about outside high hotels or huts in the evening.

Next morning we set off at 6.45. A.M. by moonlight and

<sup>1</sup> That is the doubtful point, high up.



in intense cold. We crossed the Daubensee and made for the Lämmern glacier ; but when or where we struck it one could not say ; the same white sheet covered everything. We saw tracks that came down the middle of the glacier ; but we followed others that kept to one side (the true right side, and our left), traversing a very steep slope, still on our ski.

I was surprised to find that ladies had been taken along here unroped and on ski. It would not have been at all difficult to slip out and come to grief. How guides stand with respect to responsibility when they make ski-tours on the higher mountains in winter, I do not know ; but such lack of precautions would not be tolerated by the authorities with regard to summer climbing. Here, the passage on foot, roped, would have been absolutely safe.

[I imagine that, so far, the difficulties of managing a rope properly when the party is on ski has caused the attitude of the guides to be more or less—‘ If you want to go, I ’ll show you the way for so much ’ ; they do not take charge of the party as they do in summer.]

We had a halt for food from 10.40 to 11.15, and the cold was not very great. For the steeper part up we used skins on our ski, and found them a great advantage.

The top (10,670 feet above the sea) was reached at 12.10. The view was very beautiful and extensive ; and mountain after mountain was recognised. In one respect, however, these winter views are somewhat disappointing. The glory of the great snow mountains depends much on contrast ; and, when all is white, one can hardly distinguish little from big. In winter, I am inclined to think that the most beautiful scenery occurs near the tree limit ; where you glide on virgin snow through the last of the frosted pines and see the pure white hills rise before you. I note

one most beautiful lower excursion, later on, when speaking of Grindelwald.

On the slopes down from the Wildstrubel on its other side, we had bad snow ; icy stuff. After that we descended on to the Wildstrubel glacier, crossed the Glacier de la Plaine Morte, a singularly extensive and level snowfield to find in such a small mountain group, and reached the Wildstrubel club hut at 2.20 P.M. The hut was deadly cold, and the paraffin stoves, which for some reason (I forget what) we had to use in place of the wood-stove, smoked horribly ; the room was filled with floating soot. Kuhn and I tried to lose our sense of discomfort in a discussion on the characters in *Faust*—of all things ! But soon a more serious matter claimed our attention. It appeared to be coming on for wind and snow, a regular spell of bad weather ; and the guide said that, with a night's snow, we could neither retreat to Kandersteg nor advance over the Wildhorn to Lenk, for fear of avalanches, even could he find the way in such weather ; while the one safe way out of our fix, that to Montana, he did not know well enough to find unless it was quite clear. That was the position according to him. Another of the risks of the higher mountains in winter ! One can hardly imagine being cut off and starved or frozen in the Wildstrubel, or indeed in any, hut in summer.

We got up about 2 A.M. to see how things were. There was an icy wind, and the sky was bad ; but the moon gave some light through the clouds and there was no mist. We breakfasted at about 2.30, and at 3.15 A.M. we stood outside ready to move. The guide said that we could now certainly get to Montana ; but if we could count on some four or five hours free from mist or falling snow, he could take us to Lenk. What did I think ? My opinion was

that it would probably be clear until 9 or 10 A.M. So we settled to make for Lenk past the Wildhorn.

We had very disagreeable icy slopes to descend at the beginning, and we should have been more comfortable without ski; especially as the light was bad. To our surprise the weather improved as we went on, and we saw that we could go up the mountain itself instead of passing it by and making for Lenk. But it remained so cold that although we had breakfasted as early as 2.30 A.M., we could not stop for food until we reached the hut below. For the steeper part we put the skins on the ski again, and we reached the summit at 8 A.M. (10,705 feet above the sea). I think it was about then that we got some sun.

The view is fine. If I remember aright, the Matterhorn, seen from the Wildstrubel, was here just hidden by the Dent Blanche.

Ten minutes was all that we dared to give, for our feet had been near frostbite ever since the hut.

It was a grand run down over the Glacier de Ténéchet to the edge of the ice fall where one descends, by the side of the 'Kirchli,' to the Dungal glacier below. On the way we whizzed past two ascending figures (they turned out to be Mr. Tattersal and the guide Pieren), and mutual greetings were left strewn on the air, since we were then going fast.

The steep descent of the ice fall went very well, but we all made kick-turns, as the slope was not one on which we could swing. Once on the lower level, good snow soon took us down to the Wildhorn hut, which we reached at 8.40 A.M.

At last some food! We needed it; and again China tea with lots of sweetened Nestle's milk in it proved wonderfully comforting.

It was 10.10 before we left. The snow was good all the way down, and we soon reached the little Iffigen lake. Beyond that comes a very curious part of the route. Just below the lake the valley closes up, and the exit from this upper part is through quite a narrow gap. Beyond this there is at first a very steep descent; and what with the steepness, and the possibilities of snow slipping from above, I was rather surprised that this approach to the Wildhorn can be counted on as safe in winter at all; it looks 'avalanchy,' decidedly.

However, the snow was very good; soft enough for ski-ing, and yet not dangerous. So, after a bit of climbing down on ski, we started on a glorious run that lasted until we got into the forest path below.

Certainly, for all my private doubts as to the advantage that is in general gained by extending ski tours above 8000 feet or so, this run from a height of 10,700 feet had given us what we had never had before. It was perfect—*on that day*. The path once reached, we had no more good ski-ing. Mr. Tattersal had started from the hut with us, and we lunched together at Lenk. At 1.35 we set off for Adelboden, Pieren leading one of the two 'wolf-dogs,' belonging to the Kurhaus at Adelboden, that had insisted on accompanying them the day before and had been left tied up at Lenk. These are remarkable dogs. They are, I heard, one-quarter wolf, and have powerful paws that seem out of proportion to their general make; a characteristic (I have read) of wolves. And their general bearing, the carriage of their heads, and the expression, all give an aspect of a certain wildness and aloofness that seems to mean, not savageness or unreliability, but independence and freedom from that weak side of the dog-character—cringing.

We stopped for coffee at Gilbach, and it was dark before we went on. When we had got to the bottom of the path, by the bridge, I found I had left my sack behind at Gilbach. So I went back alone. To my surprise the wolf-dog came back with me. When I set off again, he kept just ahead of me on the icy path, which logs and wood-sleighs between them had made quite awkward for night walking, and appeared to be showing me the way and watching me. He even saw me up to my room in my hotel before he went back to his. Yet he did not smile, nor wriggle, nor come to be patted, as other dogs would; nor did he show any special friendliness next day. I feel sure, however, that he did intend to look after me when he saw me turn back alone in the dark.

From the top of the Wildhorn, Kuhn and I had had a run such as we had never had before; and we were keen to do this mountain again. But we were destined to learn how snow conditions can change.

We set off alone a day or two later, passed Lenk, and made up for the hut. It had been just above the forest that our last glorious run had ended.

Alas! all was different. Everywhere the snow was crusted; ski could not be used, and in boots and crampons we broke through continually. On the Iffigen See we met a sad procession of guides and amateurs, coming from Kandersteg, who had been compelled to take off their ski high up above the Kirehli.

The hut was deadly cold. I do not think that the fire was out until 11 p.m.; shutters and windows were closed, and we two living beings helped to warm the room. Yet at 4.30 a.m. next morning one of the vessels of water left on the fire was partly frozen. Very suggestive of what would happen to a party who were benighted on the mountains.

Certainly in winter high tours are a somewhat venturesome intrusion into the kingdom of the Frost Giants.

Well ; we got to the top, and had a piece of fairly good ski-ing down the first part. But the less said of the ski-ing as a whole the better.

On our return, when we had passed Lenk, crossed the Hahnenmoos, and reached the forest path that leads to Gilbach, it was quite dark. I think that our run down this path was the most enjoyable part of the whole day. In the dark we surrendered ourselves to the hollow icy way that sloped gently downward, and glided along, steering by feel and not by sight. Dark objects ran at us and seemed to be about to strike us, when a pressure on the ski from the unseen banks of our groove caused us to swerve and evade them. Adelboden was reached at 7.30 P.M.

Looking back at the expedition in the light of recent experience, I see that we were far too small a party for such an expedition. Ski-ing experience has to be gained even when one is at home in the mountains in summer. When, two winters later, I broke an ankle ski-ing up on the Diablerets (over bad, wind-drifted snow) I was with a large party. Even so, and with assistance brought, it took nine hours to get me to the nearest shelter ; and it was a wonder that I did not lose my feet by frostbite. Yes ; one is an intruder when high up in winter.

Later on I went for a week to Grindelwald, and was delighted with everything. I put up at the small Pension Wolter ; but the ski-ing set at the great Bear hotel were most friendly and hospitable, and at once asked me to join in their expeditions.

The run down the Männlichen, whose summit is not far short of 4300 feet above the stream at Grindelwald, is a delightful experience. But what dwells in my memory

most is our round over the Grosse Scheidegg by Rosenlaui to Meiringen, and so home by steamer and train. That Rosenlaui valley in winter ! It is marvellous in its beauty.

. . . . .

My last diary is closed. I can only hope that this record may so stir memories in my readers that, for all its defects, it may bring back to them their own days in the mountains.

If but the kindly years may grant us still  
To track the lonely valley to its end,  
And view, though from afar, the crag-bound hill  
Lift its long greeting—as old friend meets friend  
In life's brief rest from labour at the last,  
When all that asks the clearer word is spoken,  
When heart knows heart, and all the wistful past  
Wakes in one glance—then shall this love, unbroken,  
Ye mountains, by our striving and your strength,  
Find its last pleasure only in the seeing,  
And deep beyond all depth of words at length  
Pulse with a life more lasting than mere being.

. . . . .

And when our last gold sun shall turn to wake  
Late amber shadows in the sleeping grass,  
And the grey lashes of the evening lake  
Shall close for ever on our last dim pass,  
The best of us, the soul we never lost,  
Shall join that host upon the cloud-girt stair.  
Selfless, a part of all we loved the most,  
Friends of the mountains, you will find us there.

*Geoffrey Winthrop Young.*

## APPENDIX

## EXPLANATION OF CERTAIN MOUNTAIN TERMS

IN the following I have aimed rather at giving to the general reader a clear idea of what is the probable meaning of unfamiliar words that he may come across in this book—or more generally, when he is visiting the mountains—than at giving perfect definitions that would serve for a standard dictionary.

**Arête.** In general, a ridge. This may be a more or less level ridge, as that (*e.g.*) connecting two mountains; or it may be a mere rib descending from the summit of a mountain. The essential characteristic is that the fall to either side is very steep as compared with the general angle of slope along it.

**Avalanche.** A descending mass, of relatively large dimensions, of snow, broken ice, rocks, or mud. When the material is not named it is safe to assume that it was snow. When of ice, the expression 'fall of ice,' or 'of sérac' (*not* ice-fall, *q.v.*) is often used instead.

**Bergschrund.** One sees, in the mountains, sheets of snow and ice clinging to the mountain side; and also vast fields of snow and ice, lower down, which are slowly moving and escaping down the valleys as glaciers. The crack or crevasse between the two, which usually widens as the summer advances, is called a *bergschrund* or *rimaie*. These terms are also, sometimes, applied to the gap between the snow fields or glacier and the rocks of the mountain side.

**Buttress.** A short rib or arête descending from a mountain and ending in a cliff is called a buttress. If the arête be relatively long, you might speak of 'an arête ending in a buttress.' Sometimes the word is used of something larger; as of a subordinate peak that stands out from the side of a principal peak.

**Chimney.** 'Here we had to ascend a chimney.' This would mean that we had to climb up very steeply, either inside a big crack between two rocks, or in a corner where two faces of rock met; the essential idea being that the upward climb was steep and



that it was at any rate *possible* to help oneself by side-pressure, as used the sweep-boys in house chimneys.

**Col.** A mountain pass. Climbers use the term of any crossing place (not actually a summit), even though it be by no means the lowest point in the mountain barrier that is crossed. Many 'climbers' cols,' forced by daring and skilful climbing, are by no means what the layman would call a 'pass.'

**Cornice.** An overhang of snow or ice fringing a ridge or summit. I have never, myself, heard an overhang of *rock* called 'a cornice.'

**Couloir.** A steep furrow or groove on the side of a mountain or ridge. Couloirs are apt to be 'rubbish shoots' for snow or stones; and couloir climbing is perhaps on the whole to be avoided, though very often the snow lying in them makes ascent or descent easy.

**Crampons.** Spiked implements that are bound on to the soles of the boots for use on ice or hard snow.

**Crevasse.** A crack or chasm in fields or slopes of ice or snow.

**Firn.** Generally taken as the German equivalent for *névé* (ii).

**Gabel.** German for *fork*; a notch. There is a notch between the two summits of the Ober-Gabelhorn; and the notch on the Rothhorn is called 'the Gabel.'

**Gendarme.** This usually means a tower or pinnacle of rock; and, since one is as a rule concerned with these only when they bar the way up an arête, one rarely uses the word save when the said tower or pinnacle stands on an arête.

**Glacier or Gletscher.** This usually means a slowly-moving river of ice, the overflow of wider fields and slopes of snow and ice above. One may say that the glaciers discharge the snow-fall occurring in a mountain group. If the end of the glacier descend low enough, the discharge will be seen to take ultimately the form of the glacier stream. If the glacier end at a high cliff, the discharge may take the form of ice blocks that fall over the cliff and melt below.

Accumulations of ice and *névé* perched on the mountain side, often mere pockets, are called *hanging glaciers*, though they may be in no obvious sense streams of ice.

Taking August as the month of observation, one may say, generally, that, for some distance—it may be some miles—up from the end, a glacier is of true ice, and is not covered with snow; it is 'open glacier.' In this part the crevasses are nearly always widest at the top; there is no concealed danger, and the rope is rarely used.

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Further up you come to *névé* [see *névé* (ii)], and many of the crevasses will be concealed. This is 'covered glacier,' and the rope is used here. In general, the crevasses in this part, whether visible or concealed, are overhung at the top—a fact that may make the situation of a small party exceedingly awkward if the first or last man on the rope get in 'head-over.'

**Grat**=*arête* (*q.v.*).

**Ice fall.** Wherever a glacier, owing to an abrupt fall in its bed, descends steeply, it becomes (in general) much broken up. Such a broken and steep fall in a glacier is called an ice-fall. [It has nothing to do with a fall of ice, or ice-avalanche.]

**Joch**=*col* (*q.v.*).

**Kletterschuhe.** Boots, usually made of canvas and having rope soles, used in climbing smooth rocks (especially Dolomite) where nailed boots do not hold well.

**Massif.** A mountain group; as in the expression 'the massif of Mont Blanc.'

**Moraine.** Debris of rock or earth that has been carried down by, and deposited by, a glacier, or is still travelling on the glacier.

The word should not be used of debris that has been deposited by water or in any other way.

**Névé.** (i) *As a material.* Snow that is on its way toward transformation into ice; hard, granular, and opaque.

(ii) *As a region.* The wider, upper snow-covered regions of a glacier; these regions being in general composed of a layer of snow at the top, the material *névé* below this, and probably ice still deeper down below the surface.

**Rimaie**=*Bergschrund*.

**Rochers Moutonnés.** Rocks rounded and smoothed by glacial action. At least one such may be seen below Rosthwaite in The Lakes. They abound near Saas Fee; and the Mauvoisin inn, in the Val de Bagnes, is built on one. Unmistakable evidence of glacier action. Supposed to resemble sheep's backs.

**Screes.** Slopes of loose stones. German *Gerölle*, French *éboulis*.

**Sérac'd, séracs, sérac.** (i) A glacier is *sérac'd* when broken up by systems of crevasses that cross one another.

(ii) The blocks into which it is thus cut up are, strictly speaking, *séracs*; but the term is nearly always taken to indicate only the bolder towers and pinnacles into which a glacier is, in places, broken, especially those of an ice-fall.

(iii) When a hanging glacier, or any mass of ice above, sends down an ice avalanche, this is often called 'a fall of sérac'; it being assumed, I imagine, that the ice above was split up into séracs and that some of these have toppled over the cliff.

**Steigeisen = crampons** (*q.v.*).

**Traverse.** (i) 'In ascending the arête we came across an unclimbable gendarme and had to *traverse*.' This would mean that a rock tower in the ridge compelled us to leave the ridge and cross the steeper face. This special climbers' use of 'traverse' refers to crossing the face of a mountain or ridge in any direction that is not practically straight up and down; the upper man cannot (by holding the rope) prevent the man next below him from swinging down sideways

[Of course climbers may also speak of traversing a *level* plain, employing the word in its usual sense.]

(ii) A second special climbers' use is the following: we speak of '*traversing* a mountain' when the up route to the summit is not the same as the down route from it.

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